

Police Mag.
K, THE
M E A N S

OF EFFECTUALLY PREVENTING

THEFT AND ROBBERY;

TOGETHER WITH OUR PRESENT CRUEL

P U N I S H M E N T S

OF THOSE AND OTHER

C R I M E S:

THE MEANS OF IMMEDIATELY SUPPRESSING

VAGRANT BEGGARY:

OF SPEEDILY ABOLISHING OUR

P O O R ' S R A T E S :

AND OF RELIEVING THE PRESENT OPPRESSION
OF OUR LABOURING

C O M M O N A L T Y.

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M DCC LXXXIII.

THEFT AND ROBBERY



COMMON ALL

P R E F A C E.

THE subject of this piece being truly important, it was mostly printed, with the view of laying it before the publick, previous to the meeting of parliament: because, until that day of trial should be past, there was no certainty that our present constitutional administration would be able to support itself against the advantage that the necessary boldness of its measures evidently presented to a formidable union of different interests formed against it. And the marks of that diffidence appear in the beginning of this piece; which, though mostly printed, was suspended until the necessary attention to that urgent Indian business should be disengaged.

Therefore, the present motive for this publication is not diffidence in either the stability of the present administration, nor yet in the sincerity of its truly patriotick intentions. But it is because the evil or malady here treated of, being seated in the trunk and vital parts of the body politick, a proper and truly effectual remedy cannot be applied thereto, without probing it to the bottom; and discovering the nature, the true causes, and the full extent of the corruption that is lodged therein: for palliatives will only skin it over. And, to thus necessarily probe that seat of corruption in the trunk, may possibly be a more disagreeable task to a minister, than was the discharging the corruption in that Indian limb; which could be assigned to second causes.

That

P R E F A C E.

That disagreeable though necessary task, as likewise some trouble, may be saved to administration by this publication : wherein is proposed, as a preliminary step, a reform in the *present Mode of executing our Laws*; upon principles founded in our constitution, as well as in the laws of eternal justice, reason, and the nature of things, and also in necessity. The absurd, irrational, and iniquitous nature of our present *Parish Poor System* is next considered: and, what may to some appear superfluous, that system is traced from its original simple institution, to its present pernicious and destructive state: though others will perceive the necessity as well as the propriety of our going so far back.—This, nevertheless, is still but a part of the whole design. For when we come to truly state the actual situation, in which the two parts of this community, consisting of the poor or labouring commonalty and the rich part or publick, do relatively stand to each other, it will appear so mutually unnatural, inhuman, and barbarous, that, notwithstanding we daily see and feel it, our reason will almost discredit our senses. The true causes of this unnatural relative situation are here explained; not through wantonness, but from necessity; that necessity of looking our real situation boldly in the face, and encountering it, in order to remedy it. And the remedy that is here proposed, will, it is presumed, appear to be not only practicable, rational, humane, and effectual, but highly beneficial to the publick.—

O N T H E

NON-EXECUTING OUR LAWS, &c.

EVERY one is sensible, and loudly complains that there is some radical defect in our police and laws relating to the management of the poor, and the suppression of Theft and Roguery. Indeed, the abuses arising from this defect have now arrived to a height unknown at any other period, or in any other country, the most barbarous and uncivilised. Of the several causes that have produced the enormous encrease of those abuses, I shall here only remark one, that THE PEOPLE, who, themselves alone, either can, or ever will apply the remedy, do not exert their own powers to this effect: but, like the labourer in the fable, supinely look up to their government, and particularly to their executive government, which in truth cannot, and if it could never would take the trouble to redress them. Introduction.

This supine reliance on executive government is a principal cause, that the source of those so enormous, destructive, and disgraceful evils is not looked into and purified. Our numerous penal laws, or, which is the same thing, the mode of executing them, tends only to purge the stream; whilst the poison, which will never cease to vitiate those streams, is left entire in the fountain-head.

For instance, they punish the criminal after the crime is committed, upon the vain supposition that the sight of such punishment will deter others from the commission of that crime. But who are they upon whom this terror is to operate? Not the multitude of wretches who have already entered

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into the same courses; and who, having once begun the career, are effectually cut off by character and the want of means, as much as by the want of inclination, from all possibility of either stopping short, or of retreating: who, by that time, have no medium of choice betwixt certain starving and uncertain hanging: terror comes too late to reclaim them. And as little will it operate upon those younger candidates for the gallows, who are as yet too young for reflection; but who, under the most profligate tuition, are more likely to be hardened, than reformed, by the frequency of executions. But experience, that unerring prover of truth, hath long ago evinced, that terror is impotent, and inadequate to the effect intended by our penal laws.

To effectually suppress Theft and Roguery, as well as Beggary, we must devise some certain method to take away that which is the common cause of both. "Take away the cause, and the effect will cease." And I presume that every one will agree with me, that idleness, or the want of useful employ, is the true, as well as the common cause of Theft and Beggary. For, that the idle fellow, whom an unfortunate education, or the difficulty of his circumstances, with a hardy constitution, have qualified to despise the gallows, takes the road that leads thereto; whilst the completely idle and dastardly wretch throws himself upon the parish.

And, surely, the slightest consideration of our present circumstances is, in itself, argument sufficient to rouse the public to a proper exertion in applying a remedy to those evils. Seeing that, on the one hand, we live in a state altogether unprotected, by the laws, from hourly danger to our lives and property, by the depredations of a numerous set of bold and desperate ruffians; who are let loose and encouraged, by some fatal neglect, or else knavery, in the execution of our laws, to set them with all their terrors and punishments at open defiance. For every
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one acknowledges himself convinced, that the frequency of executions, so opposite to the genius of the English nation, only serves to increase the evil.

And, on the other hand, we are delivered up by the law, to be devoured by beggars; for the maintenance of whom we are subjected to a tax infinitely heavier than is conceived or imagined. Whilst we are, at the same time, staggering under a load of other unavoidable incumbrances; so much too heavy for our shoulders, that every one possessed of industry and activity is looking round for a way to shake off his share of the burden, by emigrating to some other country less oppressed and better governed than this.

But, along with her industrious inhabitants, industry herself will desert this devoted land: and, with industry, wealth. And when this shall happen, from whence is the landholder to look for his rent, the stockholder for his dividend, the lawyer for his fee, the divine for his stipend, the courtier for his pension, or the King himself for his present ample Civil List? These are interesting queries. Nor is this danger so distant that we can, with any regard to common prudence, indulge our indolence, for even one year longer, under that base, sordid, and selfish cloke, "That it will last our time." Assuredly, there is no one in this country, either so high or so low, that is not loudly called upon, by his own personal interest, to join in the general and immediate exertion to avert this danger. And general and universal must this exertion be. For if every one shall continue to trust to his neighbour, and the whole to government, there is no remedy.

It is an honest intention to contribute his mite towards averting this common danger, and not any opinion of his own superior knowledge, nor yet a view to literary fame, or any one other personal advantage, that hath induced an individual to communicate the following hints to the publick: not as

a complete or unexceptionable plan; but merely as a basis for others of greater skill and abilities to build upon. He is thoroughly aware of the risk he runs who advances opinions that are new, in opposition to customs and habits that are sanctioned by age: which, however pernicious they may have become, through a change of those circumstances which at one time rendered them proper or innocent, may still be strongly supported by interested advocates, on the ground of that venerable authority. But, confiding in the integrity of his intention, he trusts to the candour of the publick; and hopes that in the present alarming situation no one will sacrifice the common good, with the share he himself holds therein, to any partial or personal views: or will employ his talents to idly criticise what is not offered as unexceptionable. He rather trusts that this honest endeavour to do good will stimulate every one who knows any thing more conducive to the desired effect, to candidly impart his own better knowledge; or otherwise, that he will join in promoting this. The writer hereof is himself satisfied and convinced, that a reform of those destructive and disgraceful abuses, is not only thus indispensably necessary, but is likewise easily practicable; more particularly for that he hath been witness to a late reform of the like abuses completely effected by a neighbouring people; as will appear in the sequel.

On the NON-EXECUTING our LAWS: and the Means of effectually restraining THEFT, and other CRIMES.

Who execute our laws.

IT hath been said that the present enormity of theft and roguery, with other such evils, is owing to the improper manner of executing our laws. In order to prove this, we must enquire, First, Who they are that execute our laws. Second, The manner

ner in which they ought to execute them, in order to render them effectual. And Third, The manner in which they actually do execute them.

The immediate power of executing all our laws, ^{Justices of} relating to the police, or peace and good govern- ^{the peace.} ment of the people, is committed to the justices of the peace, who are nominated and appointed by the Crown (except in certain cities and places particularly exempted by Charter;) by virtue of a commission likewise issued by the Crown; empowering them " To keep the peace in the county to ^{Their} " which they are appointed: and to keep, and cause ^{commis-} " to be kept all ordinances and statutes for the good ^{sion.} " of the peace, and for preservation of the same; " and for the quiet rule and government of the " people made, in all and singular their articles in " the said county (as well within liberties as with- " out) according to the force, form, and effect of " the same: and to chastise, and punish, &c."

From the terms of this commission, we learn the ^{Their du-} great extent of power committed to the justices; and ^{ty and} also the nature of those purposes for which this ^{power.} power is granted them: being to keep and preserve the peace, order, and good government of the whole body of the people, according to the full force, form, and effect of all laws for that purpose made. A most important trust, and arduous task; to duly perform which demands great abilities, patriotick integrity and exertion, together with the whole time and attention of the justice. For, the punishing of crimes after they are committed, as it appears to be but the second and ultimate part of the commission, to be used only in the case that the first shall have proved ineffectual; so will it never serve to prevent disorder, or to preserve order. To effect that first part of the commission, the justices must minutely and particularly inspect into the beginnings of every cause of disorder, and into every circumstance that is likely to produce it. And, to this end,

they ought to not only keep a watchful eye over the manners of every house, and particularly of such as are the most likely to harbour, encourage, and promote vice, immorality, or any other sort of disorder; but to look into the manner of life, conduct, and employ of each individual within their districts. For doing which, the justices have sufficient powers*, and are, by the constitution, provided with excellent means, by the institution of constables; being an inferior degree of officers of the peace, armed with powers expressly designed for this minute inspection; and who act under the immediate direction of the justices. An excellent institution upon the whole, and most wisely framed by our ancestors: of which Lord Coke says, "The whole Christian world hath not the like, *if it be duly executed.*"—4 Inst. 170.

Such is this institution of justices of the peace; such are their powers and duty; and such are the ways and means by which alone they can duly execute the trust committed to them. But, if we shall look into the way and manner in which the justices of this day do actually discharge their trust, we shall find it not only different, but opposite to that here described. This is so universally known, that it would be tiresome to say any thing on the subject, did not our purpose of proposing a remedy thereto render it necessary.

In regarding the conduct of our justices, we must keep our eye principally upon those of Westminster; because, by its junction to the city of London, it must always give the *ton* to the manners of the latter; inasmuch

* The Statutes 4 H. VII. c. 12.—33 H. VIII. c. 10.—and 37 H. VIII. c. 7. give them a further general power than is expressed either in their commission, or in any particular statute. And they have a discretionary power of binding to the good behaviour; and may exact a heavy recognizance where the party is likely to break the peace and do much mischief; and in default of sureties commit them to gaol.—*Pasch.* 1652. 2 Litt. 26. 131.

inasmuch that the magistrates thereof will ever find it impossible, by any care or vigilance, to prevent their police from being very nearly the same as that of Westminster: and the manners and police of the country will ever be regulated by those of the metropolis.

To enter into a particular detail of the whole conduct of our Westminster justices, would appear not only tiresome, but invidious. It shall suffice to say, that they are divided into two species or genus. The first is exceeding numerous, and do not even consider themselves as capable of doing much good; but apply to the crown for this office, merely for the sake of placing a feather in their cap; which, as they are not entitled to it by their rank in life, they could not otherwise come at; and few or none who do apply are refused this feather. These, form a class in this office, which is in a great measure neutral, insipid, and inoffensive; doing but little harm, and less good. And in this class we are to rank by far the greater part of our innumerable country justices.

The other species of our Westminster justices is Of trading composed of those who execute all the active part of that office; the men of business; and who are emphatically stiled by the public, *Trading Justices*; because they get into the commission expressly for this purpose, and no other, to make justice a trade, by selling her for their own profit and gain. These are exceedingly attentive and alert, immediately on entering upon their office, to obtain a minute knowledge of every house where disorder, vice, or immorality are practiced or harboured; and of almost every idle, vicious, or disorderly person; not, however, for the purpose of preventing or suppressing vice or disorder, including theft and roguery; but for the purpose of laying all the practitioners thereof under a proper contribution to the magistrate: which so long as they shall continue to regularly pay, they may go on with their business in safety, secure from

the resentment of the public : though at proper times, when it better suits the interest of his worship, certain offenders are produced for execution, in like manner as fattened fowls are taken out of the coop. But, of the manner in which they exercise their powers, volumes of instances would not convey a more complete idea, than doth the declaration made by the Upper House of the legislature itself, on the late business of the E O tables ; which, notwithstanding it was admitted *nem. con.* to be a most pernicious evil ; yet was it likewise allowed *nem. con.* that the continuation of it would be a less evil to the publick, than would be the trusting those Westminster justices with the powers necessary to suppress it.

Effects of their conduct. In what situation might we expect to find the police or government of a mighty city, where the laws were kept muzzled, or completely asleep and dormant ? But how much worse must the situation be where the magistrates, who are entrusted with the only power of executing the laws, do not only keep them thus muzzled from being of use to the publick ; but are more careful of preserving a plentiful breed of vice, disorder, and immorality, than the hunting squire is of preserving the breed of foxes in his neighbourhood.

A total dissolution of order. Well may we exclaim, in the bitterness of our soul, that to daily multiply our laws, without providing for the due execution of any one, is adding insult to abuse. In fine, the situation into which our police or popular government is at present brought, by this undue execution of our laws, is such, as is considered by all foreigners to be disgraceful, not only to a civilized state, but to human nature ; and, at home, we feel it to be altogether intolerable and ruinous.

Causes of their bad conduct. Now, this undue execution of our laws will, upon enquiry, be found to spring principally, almost totally, from these two causes : first, that improper persons are appointed to this office ; and second, that the conduct of these persons is in no shape superintended.

tended, checked, or controuled. We shall in the sequel mention two other causes, though of an inferior degree, because they can be more easily remedied, provided these now mentioned should be remedied; and indeed, in that case, the remedy of these latter would follow the other remedy, in a manner of course.

And if we shall further enquire for the true cause ^{The} why improper persons are appointed to execute our laws, and why their conduct is not superintended, we ^{Crown names and superin-} shall find it to be entirely owing to this, That the ^{tends the} whole and sole power of so nominating and superintending those officers is vested in the crown: which, ^{justices.} from two different circumstances, is perfectly unqualified to exercise this power for the benefit and welfare ^{Unqualified for that charge.} of the people. First, because the crown is no way interested in the event of those officers conduct; and, for that reason, gives itself no manner of concern whether the persons it appoints are proper or not, nor whether they duly discharge their duty or not. Second, Because the Crown, even if it was ever so well disposed, cannot possibly know who are the persons proper for that office, nor when and how they behave amiss in their office; and likewise, because it doth not, and cannot possess those means which alone can effectually serve to enforce the good conduct, and punish the bad conduct of those officers.

Whereas it is evident, that all those qualifications, ^{The people qualified for it.} requisite to a due and proper exercise of this nominating and superintending power, which are thus wanting in the Crown, are lodged in the people, and in them alone, and completely. For that they must needs know who are the proper persons, and they have every the strongest motive of interest to choose those proper persons to execute the laws, and afterwards to strictly superintend their conduct; seeing their order and good government, nay, the safety of their lives and property, with every thing that is dear and valuable to the people, depend on a due execution

tion of the laws. The people alone can know how and when those officers neglect their duty, or misapply their powers. And the people alone possess the effectual means and power to enforce the good conduct, or punish the ill conduct of those officers; as shall be shown in the sequel.

That power in the Crown is a solecism. These things being considered, it will appear the greatest solecism in state government, and the grossest outrage to justice, reason, and the nature of things; that this said power should not be vested in the people, who are thus completely qualified in every respect to exercise it for their own benefit, welfare, and happiness: and that it should be vested in the Crown, which is as completely unqualified, in every respect, to exercise it for the good of the people.

Against justice, reason, and nature. Against the constitution. But this solecism, this contradiction to justice, reason, and the nature of things, did not always exist in our constitution. On the contrary, it appears, from the unanimous consent of all our law authors, that the right of electing those officers of the peace, was by the common law, or constitution, originally vested in the people; and that it so continued vested in them for many ages.

Should be restored to the people. Therefore it is here proposed, as the fundamental, and an indispensibly necessary step towards a reform of all those destructive and disgraceful abuses, that this right and power, of electing and nominating those officers of the peace, should be *restored* to the people; as being alone qualified to exercise that power for their own benefit, welfare, and happiness; and as being *rightly* entitled thereto, by the constitution, as well as by the laws of justice, reason, and the nature of things.

Right of the Crown to be examined. But, as the power to nominate those officers of the peace hath been vested in the Crown for such a length of time, that it is now considered, by the greater part of the people themselves, as a part of the constitution, it becomes necessary, in support of this said proposal, to shew, that the power of so nominating

minating is not vested in the Crown by the constitution: but, that on the contrary it was, and still is vested, by the constitution, in the people: and that it became vested in the Crown, by a breach of the constitution; and in other respects illegally and unjustly.

For the purpose of proving this, it becomes necessary to show, first, the manner in which the people formerly possessed and exercised this power, and next, the time when, and manner how it came to be translated from the people to the Crown. And this, at the risk of appearing tedious to some, who, however necessary and interesting this part of the subject may be, will think it but dry.

It becomes unnecessary to adduce the authority of any one or more law writers in proof that the right ^{People} and power of electing those officers of the peace was ^{elected} originally vested in the people, by the constitution ^{conserva-} or common law, because that is a fact universally ad- ^{tors by} mitted and agreed upon by every one of those law ^{common} authors. But the particular manner in which the ^{law.} people exercised that right by common law, is thus recorded by Lord Coke, 2 *Inst.* 558. 559*, and from him and other authors, by *Burn, in his Justice*, to which I refer, as being a book in the hands of every one.

“ Of ancient time such officers or ministers as ^{The} were instituted either for preservation of the peace ^{manner} of the county, or for execution of justice, be- ^{of elect-} cause it concerned all the subjects of that county, ^{ing con-} and they had a great interest in the just and due ^{servators.} exercise of their several places, were, by force of the King's writ in every several county, chosen in full or open court, by the freeholders of that county.”

* Heretofore there were conservators of the peace at common law, elected by the county, upon a writ directed to the sheriff: but the election of conservators is transferred by statutes from the people to the King: and at length justices of peace were, and still are created conservators of the peace, by commission, or letters patent under the great seal.—1 *Inst.* 174, 175.

“ ty.” And thus, “ As, before the institution of
 “ justices of the peace, there were conservators of the
 “ peace in every county ; whose office (according to
 “ their name) was to conserve the King’s peace, and
 “ to protect the innocent and obedient subjects from
 “ force or violence. These conservators, by *the an-*
 “ *cient common law* were, by force of the King’s writ,
 “ chosen by the freeholders in the county court,
 “ out of the principal men of the county, after which
 “ election so made and returned, then in that case,
 “ the King directed a writ to the party so elected, to
 “ take upon him and execute the office, until the
 “ King should order otherwise. And thus the coro-
 “ ners still continue to be chosen in full county, as
 “ also the knights of the shire for the parliament.”

Virtue of
the con-
servators.

Such was the footing upon which this office was first instituted ; and upon this footing it continued for many ages : during which time it is said the peace and good order of the country was preserved, in a wonderfully regular, and exact manner, by those conservators.

The
Crown
acquired
this power
by statute.

It is in like manner universally agreed upon, by all our law athours, that the power of electing the conservators, was translated from the people to the Crown, at the beginning of the reign of Edward the Third ; by the following statute: 1 *Ed.* 3 c. 16. “ For
 “ the better keeping and maintenance of the peace,
 “ the King will that in every county, good men and
 “ lawful, which be no maintainers of evil, or barre-
 “ tors in the country, shall be assigned to keep the
 “ peace.” And from this act (saith the wise and learned Lambard) we are to date that great alteration in our constitution, whereby the election of conservators of the peace was taken from the people, and translated to the assignment of the King *. *Lamb.* 20.

On

* Lambard wrote on this office of justice of the peace before Dalton ; whose work was published in the reign of King James the First : since which time no book under that title hath been allowed sufficiently authentick.—*Burn’s Justice, preface.*

On which head we are to observe, first, that this right and power, which the people held by common law, was translated from them to the Crown, by a statute. For it is not the less a statute that it runs in the King's name only.

And we are next to observe, that the parliament, ^{That par-} which enacted this translating statute was not a legal ^{liament} parliament on two accounts *: First, because it was illegal. packt by the infamous Mortimer, who at that time ruled all despotically, by means of the Queen Mother; and who convoked this parliament expressly for the purpose of deposing the unfortunate Edward the Second; who was then still living. And, second, because Edward the Third, who was the King *de facto* of this translating parliament, had not been then legally created King: and was moreover, a minor, acting entirely under the influence and direction of his mother and Mortimer.

And, finally, we shall find that this statute itself, ^{The sta-} when duly considered, does not actually translate or ^{tute 1 Ed.} convey that power of electing, from the people to ^{III. does} the crown. For, it runs thus—The King will, that ^{not con-} persons of a certain description shall be assigned (nominated or appointed). Whereas, if the King had been actually authorised, either by that statute or otherwise, to expressly nominate and appoint the ^{vey.} persons

“ But, as young Edward's authority could not be established, while his father continued unimpeached, the Queen and Mortimer resolved to proceed to a formal deposition of that unfortunate monarch. Writs were issued for returning eight and forty members from North and South Wales. (Where Mortimer's estates lay.) And this addition of Mortimer's creatures being made to the Parliament, &c.”—*Smollet's History*, vol. III. p. 302. Now, this was the Parliament 1 Ed. 3. which enacted that translating statute. And the following year “ A Parliament being convoked/ at “ Salisbury, Mortimer went thither with an armed force: and “ while the bishops, prelates, and other members assembled “ in parliament, were consulting about the affairs of the nation, “ he went with a body of armed men; and bursting open the “ doors, threatened them with instant death, should they pre- “ sume to speak or act in any thing contrary to his inclination.” —*Ibid.* p. 319.

persons himself, what need he to *will* that only persons of such a certain description should be assigned or appointed. The truth is, that Mortimer found it necessary, at this time, when commotions were apprehended from the divided opinion of the people respecting the title of the King *de jure*, and the King *de facto*, to dismiss all those conservators that were then acting under the commission of Edward the Second, as being by virtue of that office possessed of great power and influence in the country; and to substitute, in their stead, others that would be staunch to his own party. And, to this end, he caused his parliament to make a show of interfering in this conservator business, with which no parliament had ever before interfered, merely for the purpose of colouring or countenancing the following trick of state legerdemain. He totally omitted to issue that writ of the Crown, which was necessary for authorising the people to make a new election of conservators, as being dangerous at that time; but issued the commission singly, to certain persons, as if nominated by the people, through their representatives in parliament, which was to be supposed the most proper way of election in those times of publick commotion. It is natural to conclude, that this trick would be approved of by all the party of the young King and Mortimer, and which happened to be the majority. And thus did the Crown, or the then infamous administrator of its powers, take the advantage of the division and disunion of the people on that occasion, to strip them of one of their most important constitutional rights. At least the trick which Mortimer put upon the people at that time, though only meant to serve a temporary purpose, hath been made use of, as the handle or precedent for excluding them from that right ever since.

Power of
the Crown
acquired
by a trick
of Mortimer.

The practice of the
Crown.

For, a majority of the people having been led to countenance the Crown in once appointing these conservators, though only to serve that single occasion;

it

it might be a long time afterwards before they could have any opportunity to look into the matter. Because, the terms of the commission being that the conservators were to act "until the King should order otherwise," the Crown would take care to appoint no new conservators for some time, excepting when absolutely necessary to fill up vacancies by death; and but few of these vacancies could happen; because, at the time of enacting this statute, there were only three or four conservators in each county: and, when such new appointment became unavoidably necessary, it would be an easy matter for the Crown to make it, in a manner imperceptible to the people.

It must likewise be observed that, under such a Prince as Edward the Third, a wise and just legislator, a truly respectable King, beloved and admired by his subjects, the people would be less nice or attentive to a matter which, under such a King, would make them feel no inconvenience. His long reign, of fifty-one years, created a sort of prescriptive right for his successors.—And the people, having been once habituated to this practice, never gave themselves the trouble to think about it, so long as it was not abused to their prejudice. And, upon these terms, it might have passed unnoticed for ever.

But now that the consequences of this power, being taken from the people and vested in the Crown, have, through long continued neglect and abuse, produced such effects as, if not speedily remedied, must bring on a total dissolution of all order, with ruin to the people themselves, necessity and self-preservation call upon them, to look into the manner how that power came to be so taken from them, and vested in the Crown. And they will then find this act of translation to be illegal, null, and void: not simply through these mentioned defects in the legality of the parliament, and the expression of the statute, through which this right and power is pretended

That
power not
abused by
Edward
the Third.

Greatly
abused
since.

People's
right at
common
law

cannot be
alienated
by statute.

tended to have been conveyed to the Crown; but, because the right itself was so circumstanced, that no parliament, however legal, nor statute, however express, could either annihilate it, or convey it from the people.—For, if our lawyers explain the common law right*, it is the common birth-right that any one and all of the subjects have, for the safeguard and security of all their rights, privileges, persons, and property: all which, under that protection, are safe to them, against all the world, so long as the constitution itself shall last or endure. And, if so, a right possessed by the people at common law is an inheritance settled upon them and their posterity, by a strict and unavoidable entail; which no parliament, being only a sort of under-tenant for term, nor even any one entire generation of the people themselves, being only tenants for life, can alienate for any time beyond their own term. Nay, it would seem that even two or more parliaments, or generations, concurring, cannot dock that entail; but that any one succeeding generation may revive the claim, and enter upon the inheritance free and unincumbered. Neither doth any duration of quiet possession barr or limit the claim of the people, for, *Nullum tempus occurrit populo*, not by virtue of any delegated right, but by virtue of their own proper right. That which one parliament did can be undone by another. And old statutes must give way to new. So say our laws. But the common law endureth for ever.

Nay,

* For the common law of England, being grounded upon the general customs of the realm, includes in it the law of nature, the law of God, and the principles and maxims of the law: it is founded upon reason; and is said to be the perfection of reason, acquired by long study, observation, and experience; and refined by learned men in all ages. And it is the common birth-right that the subject hath, for the safe-guard and defence, not only of his lands, goods, and revenues, but of his wife and children, body, fame, and life.—*Co. Lit.* 97. 142. *Treatise of Laws*, p. 2. Where the common law and statute law interfere, the common law shall be preferred.

Nay, even if the people had never actually possessed this power by common law; yet, as their right to it is so evidently founded in justice, reason, and the nature of things (as hath been shown) which are also the foundation of common law, their claim to it on that ground is indisputable*.

People's
right by
justice,
reason,
and na-
ture,
above sta-
tute.

Necessity and self-preservation are likewise loud in favour of the people's claim. On the other hand, there is no one reasonable argument for the Crown's refusing or with-holding this right from the people. In the whole long commission of the justices, there is but one half sentence relating to the fines and amer- ciaments of the Crown: and to remove that plea the people may buy it off by an equivalent. The only other argument besides, is that of some little advantage in the article of power; and in this respect our justices are not of that consequence as the conserva- tors were in the time of Edward the Third: neither can any use of the justices in that respect avail the Crown, unless it be against either a competitor, or the people themselves: and there is no prospect of our justices being necessary or useful to the Crown in either of these ways. But a patriot King would never attempt to sacrifice the welfare and happiness of his people to such a trifling selfish consideration, as is any advantage to be derived from appointing the justices of peace.

No plea
on the
part of the
Crown.

Therefore, entertaining no doubt that, if the people will take the trouble of applying to the legislature for the *restoration* of this indispensably necessary right, they will readily obtain it; we proceed, in the next place, to show how, and in what manner, this power

People to
reclaim
by the le-
gislation.

C

may,

* All laws derive their force *a Lege Naturæ*; and those which do not are accounted no laws. *Fortescue*.—No laws will make a construction to do wrong: law favoureth those things that come from the order of nature. *Inst.* 183. 197.—The law of nature is *Lex Eterna*, and may not be changed. 2 *Shép. Abr.* 356.—And, if a statute is against reason, it is void.—4 *Rep.* 76. 2 *Inst.* 587.

may, in their hands, be applied to effectually remedy all those abuses of every kind and nature.

Lam-
bard's
propofal.

And to this effect we have the directions of the respectable Mr. Lambard; who proposes that, in each county, there should be a limited number of justices (he mentions sixteen;) one half of these to be men of quality, as honorary and gratuitous justices; who should not be obliged to an attendance beyond what their zeal for justice and love for their country shall incline them to; and the other half to be acting justices; gentlemen capable of business; who shall constantly attend in the respective divisions to which they shall be appointed; and be entitled to a reward for their pains; and, upon any neglect, to be subject to penalties.—*Lamb. Just.*

Of re-
wards
and pu-
nishment
of ju-
stices.
The vir-
tue there-
of.

This is, without doubt, a most judicious proposal: particularly that part which respects the institution of rewards and punishments for the acting justices. For these are the only means in the power of any one constituent to obtain any manner of service at all from his agent; or to either enforce his behaving well, or to punish his doing ill. And the attention of the agent will commonly be proportioned to the value of his expected reward and punishment. As, for instance, our present titular justices, having no other reward for their services than a feather, render service in return that is equal in weight to the feather. And our trading justices, who have neither reward nor punishment from the people, pay themselves liberally, in proportion to the trouble they take for themselves, at the ruinous expence of the people.

The want
thereof a
second
defect.

It is the want of this power in the publick, over the conduct of the justices, by means of rewards and punishments, that I alluded to, as one of the defects in the present institution. And, surely, this will appear to be one of the worst judged acts of oeconomy that can be imagined, when the advantage shall be set against the expence. For the expence of proper salaries

salaries for the acting justices of a whole county, would not be equal to the salary and perquisites of any one of our Bengal justices; whereas, the service in return, would be a due execution of our laws; without which the legislation of our parliament is but a *Vox et preterea nihil*; and which return would speedily produce benefits, to which this nation has been long a stranger.

If the reward should be proportioned to the benefit The reward a salary. that the people would receive, from a due execution of the office of justice, no reward could be adequate.

However, this is no proper standard for measuring the pecuniary reward of the acting justices: that should be proportioned to the labour, trouble, and attention they must bestow on the due execution of their office; which, at the beginning, must be great indeed; like cleansing the Augean stable; though it will afterwards decrease, in proportion as the expected reform advances. Such a due discharge of that trust will, as hath been said, demand great abilities, unwearied application and exertion, together with the whole time of the acting justices. And a consideration of these circumstances will guide to the rate of a proper salary. Though the people might judge it prudent to devise, besides, some sort of honorary rewards, to both the gratuitous and stipendiary justices, for extraordinary services.

With regard to the nature and degree of punishment for neglect of duty, the stigma of dismissing Punishment by dismissal. him from his charge would be a weighty punishment to a man of honour and feeling: and such alone, it is presumed, the people would nominate to this office, when restored to their right of electing the justices.

And for the purpose of rendering this power of Effectual punishing as well as rewarding more efficacious in the in the hands of the people. hands of the people, the writ of the Crown should be issued annually at a stated period to the sheriff, for returning a proper number of justices for each

By means
of annual
elections.

county, to be elected by the freeholders; according to the custom originally prescribed on this head by the common law: to the end that the commission or writ of the Crown should afterwards be granted, empowering the persons so returned to act. For, by these annual elections, the curb in the hands of the people, as well as the stimulus, would be ever active and powerful upon the justices; seeing that, once in every year, they would possess the opportunity of rewarding bienfaisance by re-election, and of punishing malfeasance by rejecting. It is also proper that, in an office of this consequence, the people should have the opportunity, as frequent as is convenient, of speedily remedying themselves. And it is evident, that these powers in the hands of the people would be more or less efficacious, according as the pecuniary reward of the acting justice should be an object in his eye: for patriotic disinterestedness is not sufficiently powerful in our days.

Effectual
in the
hands of
the people
only.

But as the power of such rewards and punishment clearly appears to be the only effectual means of obtaining good and due service from the justices, in their office of executing our laws; so doth it no less clearly appear, that the very being and existence of this power, to properly and effectually reward and punish the justices, depends entirely on the circumstance of *restoring* to the people their right of electing their justices.

Effects
thereof.

And it is no less certain that when the justices shall exert themselves with that integrity, assiduity, and attention, which these proposed means will oblige them to, then our laws must be duly and effectually executed; the consequence of which must be (when the only remaining defect shall be remedied) an effectual restraining and suppressing of all those destructive and disgraceful abuses.

But it must ever be held in view, that the whole building of this much desired reform is founded upon the *restoration* of that constitutional right and power

to

to the people, of electing the justices. This is a preliminary, *sine qua non*.

That third defect alluded to is, the want of proper ways and means to dispose of the idle, disorderly, and defect profligate, of both sexes; and of which, thanks to the vigilance of our trading justices, there is a most plentiful breed at present. And this, to be sure, is another most important defect in our present institution. But it is hoped that an effectual means of remedying this defect, and to the effecting which remedy good justices must greatly contribute, will be provided under the ensuing head, OF REMEDYING THE ERRORS OF OUR PRESENT POOR SYSTEM: to which we now proceed.

To be remedied on the Poor System.

On the ERRORS of our present POOR SYSTEM; the means to rectify them, and to gradually abolish the Poor's Rates, by usefully employing the Poor.

OUR Statute Poor Laws are not of very ancient date. For, ever until the dissolution of the monastries, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, the few poor of this country were mostly maintained by those religious houses. The statute 39 *El.* is the first that mentions the word *settlement*. And it is that of the 43 *El.* which obliges each parish to maintain its own poor; and prescribes the rules for their so maintaining them. Upon this said statute, 43 *Eliz.* the whole of our poor laws, and present system, may be said to have been founded. For the statute 13 and 14 *Cb. II.* by which the greater part of our settlement cases is at this day adjudged, appears, by the preamble thereof, to have been enacted, merely for the purpose of explaining and supplying some defects in the aforesaid 43 *Eliz.* relating to the settlement of the poor; which, about that time, began to be disputed

Of our Statute Poor Laws.

betwixt the different parishes. And the numerous subsequent statutes on that subject have, partly through the inattention of the legislators, and partly through the neglect of the people themselves, become a mere chip in porridge, in respect of any real benefit to the publick.

The principle of our Poor Laws.

The principle upon which our Poor Laws, whether common or statute, were originally founded, is this, That no fellow-citizen must be left to starve; but that he who cannot feed himself shall be fed by the publick.—A principle breathing the true spirit of the English nation; generous, liberal, and humane.

Of the Parish Law by 43 Eliz.

That regulation in the 43 *Eliz.* for each parish to maintain its own poor; which statute, as hath been said, still continues to be the foundation of our whole Poor System, was likewise founded upon a principle which, in the then situation of circumstances, was humane, just, and prudent. But the persisting to build upon a foundation that was adapted to particular circumstances, after those circumstances had so greatly altered, as they have done at this day, is productive of errors and abuses, that are not less pernicious and destructive to the commonweal, than they are disgraceful to the understanding of the people, and their government. As will appear from the following inspection into our present poor system; which it becomes necessary to set forth, at large, in order to point out these said errors, with their several causes and effects.

Of the execution of our Poor Laws by overseers.

The primary power of executing our Poor Laws is lodged in the justices of the peace; such as they have been described. But the immediate execution of the Poor Laws is vested in overseers of the poor. A regulation, likewise, instituted by that aforesaid 43 *Eliz.* which enacts, That the churchwardens, with two, three, or four persons (by that statute, substantial householders) in each parish, shall superintend and direct all matters relating to the poor. These overseers are appointed annually, about Easter, to act in each

each parish, town, and vill, for the ensuing year, by two justices, under their hand and seal, from lists delivered in to them by the overseers of the current year. And the overseers going out, deliver over their books of assessment and accounts to their successors, within fourteen days after their entering into office. Whereby we perceive, that these overseers ever appoint their own successors: and thereby, in effect, the only comptrollers of their accounts. For as to their verifying those accounts upon oath, before one justice, who signs and attests the same, according to the 9 G. we do not find that to be any check on their conduct: nor yet that liberty given by the same statute, for any parishioner to look into their accounts on paying one shilling.

The new overseers are, upon entering into their office, clothed with a power to assess every inhabitant of their parish, at such a rate as they shall think proper, for the relief of the poor. And this their assessment, having received the *fiat* of any two justices of the county, becomes a law more absolutely binding, and less avoidable, than any the most solemn edict of our parliament. Nor is the power of these overseers less absolute, unlimited, and uncontrouled, in the collecting and disposing of those funds, and in every thing besides relating to this Poor business.

Now, as this office of overseer is of such unlimited trust and weighty consequence, it might be imagined, it would be executed by only the most respectable inhabitants of each parish. But it is quite otherwise; for every person of any rank or credit sedulously avoids this office. Even the church-wardens themselves decline the business. And only a very inferior class of the inhabitants in each parish is employed in that office. Nay, in many parishes, even these overseers, such as they are, devolve the whole trouble upon some substitute.

And this is owing to a certain conviction, that it is morally impossible for any care in the execution of our Poor Laws to prevent or remedy those evils and abuses that unavoidably follow from the erroneous construction of those laws. For, otherwise, can we, consistent with reason, suppose that the people of England, jealous and suspicious of the management of their executive government, in the application of those taxes that are imposed by their legislature, though this application is subjected to the comptrol of their own representatives, would voluntarily, and by choice, commit to a few men of the lowest rank the uncontrouled trust of imposing, collecting, and applying a revenue, perhaps, not inferior by much above one quarter part to the standing revenue of the nation?

For, that the sums yearly paid by the publick, for the relief of the poor, in taxes and by extortion, will be found not greatly inferior to three-fourths of what is termed the standing revenue of the nation, I will take upon me to say. And though, at present, we can form only a rational conjecture at the amount of the Poor's tax, from the analogy it bears to the land tax, and to which it is nearly similar in the objects of taxation, I will venture to present such an analogical estimate thereof; to the end that the impropriety of this part of our Poor System may appear more strikingly.

An ana-
logical
estimate
of the
Poor Tax.

We all know that the land tax, when assessed by government at four shillings in the pound, produces in England and Wales about two millions sterling. But then we likewise know, that this land-tax is scarce any where actually assessed at so much as four shillings in the pound of rack-rent: that, in by far the greater part of England, it is not so much as two shillings; in many places not one shilling; and that, in the north of England, and in Wales, it is not six-pence in the pound of rack-rent. So that we shall speak greatly within bounds, if we reckon that the land-tax,

tax, which produces two millions a year, is, at a medium, assessed greatly under the actual rate of two shillings in the pound rack-rent, of the whole lands in England and Wales; and consequently, that an actual land-tax of four shillings in the pound rack-rent would produce greatly above four millions.

On the other hand, we know that, excepting some few parishes in and about the metropolis, there are very few parishes in England and Wales where the Poor's Rates are assessed under four shillings in the pound rack-rent, that in a great part of the country parishes it is six shillings; and, in many, at eight, and above. Now, let any one form to himself an ideal medium of the Poor's Rates, as they are assessed all over England and Wales; and which are, indeed, the heaviest where the Land Tax is the lightest: and, having formed that ideal medium, let him apply it to the aforesaid analogy; he will then form a tolerable conjecture at the whole amount of Poor's Rates collected yearly in England and Wales: that is to say, if his ideal medium shall be five shillings in the pound, then will the whole amount of Poor's Rates be five millions; and, if only four shillings, the amount will be four millions: more particularly, as the Poor's Rates are supposed subject to no deductions for the collection. And, if the land-tax has advantages in point of certain personals, being only pensions and posts, the Poor Tax has, in lieu of that, the benefit of many fines on trespasses of the game laws, swearing, drunkenness, &c. &c.

But, besides this settled contribution for the poor, Of the there is another contribution extorted in money and provisions, through pilfering and otherwise, by the ^{vagrant} ^{poor.} importunate vagrant poor; who swarm in every town, and in the country, to a degree that would disgrace any well-governed state, where no such settled provision was made for the poor. And this extorted contribution we cannot estimate at less than one million sterling yearly. Nor do we here reckon on the many charitable foundations that are supported by particular

particular funds; and which are more numerous in this country than in any other.

The manner of admitting a pauper.

We are next to consider the manner of admitting the settled poor to the use of those amazing sums thus collected for their relief. By the 9 *Ann.* the rule is, that any person requiring relief, shall first apply to the overseers of the parish; and, in the case of their refusing it, he applies to a neighbouring justice, and makes oath, that he is poor and impotent, and not able to provide for himself, and his family (if he has one); that his lawful settlement is in such a parish; and that, upon application to the overseers thereof, he had been refused relief. Upon the ground of this oath, the justice is bound to summon two of the overseers of such parish, to show cause why that person should not be relieved. And, thereby, the matter is brought to this issue, that the overseers must either admit the pauper, or show a sufficient cause why they refuse him. Now, it appears, that the overseers pleading that the party is able to work, or otherwise not an object of charity, can in no shape be admitted by the justice as a sufficient cause for their refusing him relief; because, the law neither constitutes, nor admits them to be the judges of that matter; on the contrary, his right to relief is a fact, previously established by his own oath.

It would seem, the only cause that can be admitted as sufficient for the overseers refusing relief to a person who hath taken this oath, is, that his legal settlement is not in their parish, but that it is in some one certain other parish: and then they can demand a warrant, from two justices, to remove him to that other parish. But this is only a remedy of one parish, town, or vill, against another; it is no remedy to the publick against the imposition of these self-made paupers. Far from that, it is to the publick a grievous aggravation of the evil; and, to the disputing parishes, towns, or vills, a remedy that is infinitely worse than the disease.

For

For now we come to the article of removal and Removal
 settlement of the poor: an inexhaustible fund of ex- and set-
 pensive litigation; and, thereby, a mighty addition tlement
 to the burden of Poor's Rates. It is not only on the of the
 occasion of a pauper's actually demanding relief, that the poor.
 overseers may apply for a warrant to remove him to
 his own parish: but, by the 13 and 14 C. II. they
 may, upon the apprehension or suspicion, that any
 person not legally entitled to a settlement in their
 parish is likely to become chargeable thereto, apply
 for a warrant of two justices, to remove him to the
 parish where he was last legally settled.—And now
 the two parishes, to which and from which the self-
 made pauper is removed, prepare for law. The
 overseers of each parish consult their oracle (some
 country attorney;) and both parishes are invariably
 in the right. An appeal is made, from the warrant of
 the two justices, to the next quarter-sessions. And,
 which ever way it is determined there, the frequent
 quashings of the orders of sessions by the Court of
 King's-Bench furnishes a never-failing argument for
 removing the cause into that court: where counsel
 learned in the law, and wise judges, waste their
 time, and puzzle their brains on discriminating, inves-
 tigating and distinguishing, all the intricate mazes of
 the inexplicable laws of settlements, and in quoting
 innumerable precedents, in order to determine whe-
 ther it shall be the parish of A or the parish of B
 that is to maintain a wretch; who, which ever way it
 goes, must still be maintained by the publick.

Now, if one shall consider that there are no less The ex-
 than ten different ways of gaining a settlement, and pence of
 that each of these ways is disputable on ten times as litigating
 many grounds: when he next considers how many settle-
 parishes there are in England and Wales; and that ments.
 many of these parishes are by the 13 and 14 C. II.
 subdivided into townships and vills, each of which
 is thereby equally induced to litigate the point of
 settlement with the other, as the distinct parishes are:

and when he further considers the late wonderful encrease of those subjects of this litigation, the idle poor; and that country attornies are the directors of almost all these litigations, he will, perhaps, be able to form some guess at the number of litigations that are annually set on foot, betwixt the different parishes, towns, and vills, on this subject of Poor's Settlements.

And when, on the other hand, he shall consider what the expence is, of removing each of these litigated paupers from perhaps one end of the kingdom to the other, first by the warrant of the two justices, then, perhaps, back by an order of the sessions, and possibly a third time by a decree of *Banco Regis*: and when he further considers, what the expence of each of the two parishes in one of these suits is, on account of attornies and agents bills, counsel's and court fees, he may, perhaps, frame some sort of conjecture at the expence which the whole process, of litigating the settlement of one single pauper, may cost the two disputing parishes, towns, or vills. And then, by multiplying the whole annual number of those litigations, by the costs of one single process, he may come at some idea of the amazing expence caused yearly to the publick, by this regulation, of each parish, town, and vill maintaining its own poor distinctly.

Of the
maintain-
ing and
employ-
ing the
Poor by
statute.

The last stage of this Poor business is, the manner of maintaining and employing the settled poor. And, at first sight, one might be led to think, that the law had provided, on this head, with art and care. For, by the aforesaid 43 *Eliz.* the church-wardens and overseers of the poor are strictly enjoined to meet once a month in the church, to consider of some good course to be taken for setting to work all children whose parents cannot maintain them; and all persons, married or unmarried, having no means to maintain them, and using no ordinary or daily trade; and shall raise weekly, or otherwise, by contributions on the parishioners,

parishioners, a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wool, iron, and other ware and stuff, to set the poor at work.—And by the 3 *W. and M.* and 9 *An.* no person is to receive relief but by the order of a justice, and to be registered in books, to be open for a shilling to the inspection of all parishioners. And, by the 8 *W.* every person receiving relief, is to wear a Roman P. with the initial letter of the parish, of red or blue cloth, on the right sleeve of the upper garment. And by the 9 *G.* every person refusing to be lodged, maintained, and employed in the house or houses appointed by the overseers, shall be put out of the collection. And the refractory are, in certain cases, to be sent to the house of correction, to be whipped and kept to hard labour.

But all these rules and regulations, however specious they appear, are, at this day, found, by experience, to be merely nugatory, impotent, and ineffectual to prevent the slothful from compelling the honest and industrious part of the community to maintain them in absolute idleness. Inefficacy
of these
statutes.

That statute of Elizabeth is the only one that provides employment for the poor; and this still continues to be the only law for that purpose. But the methods prescribed in this law, though, no doubt, extremely proper for employing the poor of Queen Elizabeth's day, cannot be put in practice for employing the poor of our day, without incurring an evil, infinitely greater than is the idleness it was meant to prevent. For the means proposed by that statute are, to purchase a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron, and other ware and stuff, whereon to set the poor at work. And the poor, in our day, who are to be thus employed in working up those wares and stuff, are many hundred thousands of settled poor, besides vagrants, amounting in the whole to, perhaps, nearly one fifth part of the whole inhabitants of the country; and by far the greater part of these is capable of strong
bodily

bodily labour. And the persons appointed to conduct this employment of the poor, in all its parts, of first purchasing this quantity of ware and stuff, sufficient to employ this amazing number of poor; next, to put and keep so many idle slothful wretches at work thereon; and afterwards dispose of this ware and stuff when wrought up, are two, three, or four overseers in each parish, such as they have been described, and who are changed annually. Insooth, these overseers, however deserving they may be of blame in other respects, have taken, in this particular, a course that is wise, honest, and beneficial to the publick. Whereas, if they were to attempt the course prescribed by that statute, the publick would be saddled with a yearly additional expence, for ware and stuff to employ the poor, equal to at least one half more, and above, the sum it yearly pays for maintaining those poor in absolute idleness.

The actual mode of maintaining the Poor.

The actual mode of maintaining the poor at present is, most commonly, for the overseers to contract with some one or more persons, to maintain and clothe all the poor of their parish, town, or vill, at so much a head: a practice warranted by the 9 G. c. 7. And this contract is commonly sanctioned by the consent of the parishioners; who thereby come at a certain knowledge of their whole yearly expence on this particular head; which otherwise would lie as much at the mercy of the overseers, as every other article of that expence doth. But this method, of contracting for the maintenance of the poor, is unavoidably productive of another very great evil, That the poor, who are thus paid for by the parish are let loose by these contractors, with whom they share the parish allowance, to infest the country round, as vagrant beggars. For these contractors are too wise to attempt making any gain, by setting those slothful wretches to work on ware and stuff; and, therefore, make no actual allowance for

for this value in their contracts, And thus, by reason of this fundamental erroneous system, the publick is reduced to the necessity of submitting to one very great evil, in order to shun a greater. For the parish poor, being thus let loose, lay the publick under a second contribution, equal to nearly doubling the number of the poor; and thereby the publick becomes further subjected to all the pilferings, thievings, and rogueries, of a numerous vagrant poor; to prevent all which is the only rational argument for settling a regular maintenance of the poor, by contribution.

And thus we have seen the entire proceeding of constituting a pauper, and of maintaining and employing the present numerous settled poor. And, from thence, we perceive the following facts: That, upon our present Poor System, every one who is too slothful to work, or who meets with the smallest difficulty in finding work, has it in his power to throw himself and his family upon some one parish. That these numberless paupers, when received upon the parish are, through the want of proper means in each single parish to employ them, maintained in absolute idleness. That this facility of admission, with the subsequent idleness, is the cause that such multitudes throw themselves upon the parish. That the present mode of maintaining the poor by contract, which, under the present system, becomes necessary, in order to shun a greater evil, doubles upon the publick the number of the poor, and entirely defeats the purpose of maintaining the poor by contribution. And that the disputes about settlements of their respective poor, betwixt the several parishes, towns, and vills, create a very great and unnecessary addition to the Poor Rates.

There is, besides these mentioned facts, a number of evil consequences unavoidably flowing therefrom, which are felt and perceived by every one. I shall, nevertheless, recapitulate the following, as part of those consequences.

First,

First, That, at a time when this country is staggering under an intolerable burthen of other unavoidable incumbrances, she is, by this system, further charged with a load of many millions yearly, for the unnecessary purpose of maintaining near a fifth part of her inhabitants in absolute idleness.

Second, That thereby the country is deprived of all use and benefit from that large proportion of her inhabitants, who otherwise might be rendered of great utility and advantage to her.

Third, That the encouragement given by the present system to idleness, damps the industry, and corrupts the manners of that part of our labourers and artisans who have not as yet given themselves up to total idleness: inasmuch, as no one of these needs, or doth at present look for any thing beyond gaining a settlement in some one parish, as a provision against all want: and, upon the strength of which, he drinks and spends, works or sits idle, without care for to-morrow, because the parish is bound to find him and his family.

Fourth, That the scarcity of labourers and artisans, occasioned by this total idleness of the one part, and the partial idleness of the other part, doth greatly enhance the price of labour, and of course the price of provisions and manufactures.

Fifth, That the present mode of maintaining the poor, in wretched idleness, is a great discouragement to population.

And lastly, That the great burden laid upon industry, by all these evils, will necessarily produce an emigration of our industrious inhabitants; with all the consequences attending thereon.

Objecti-
ons to
changing
it ob-
viated.

The errors and absurdities of this system, must, from the preceding view, strongly strike every one; as well as the magnitude of those evils which unavoidably ensue therefrom. And what inference can there be more obvious, natural, or just, than that a system, so replete with errors, that are productive of

of such destructive consequences ought to be changed? Yet there is danger that some who, because they reap a personal benefit from the present system, may wish to continue it with all its publick evils, rather than admit any innovation. These will not fail to represent this proposed alteration, as the arrogant, idle scheme of some crack-brained projector, to change an old standing system, that was originally founded by the Legislature in one of our wisest reigns; and which hath been so respected by the legislators in all the succeeding reigns, that they have never altered the venerable foundation. And it is possible that an argument of this nature, if not obviated, may weigh with many well-meaning people, who sometimes pay a greater respect to the shadow of antiquity than to the substance of reason. It, therefore, becomes necessary, before we proceed with any new proposal, to defeat this delusive argument, by a slight retrospect to the grounds and motives on which that statute 43 *El.* was originally founded, and also to the motives, grounds, and reasons why it was continued in some of the succeeding reigns; and particularly why it hath not been altered in the late and present reign, notwithstanding the alteration of circumstances required it.

It hath been said that the said statute 43 *El.* was the first regular statute that the legislature had occasion to frame for maintaining the poor, after they had been thrown upon the publick, by the suppression of the Monasteries. It hath likewise been said that this statute was founded upon a principle of humanity; which dictated that 20, 30, or 40 old or impotent people (for at that time this was most probably the greatest number of poor in any one parish) would live more comfortably amidst their own relations and connections, than if they should be removed from among them. And this regulation was likewise for the same reason perfectly just, with respect to the community; for that the parish

An historical review of the present system.

D

which

which had reaped the benefit of the former labour of these few old or impotent poor ought in justice to bear the expense of their future maintenance. Neither doth there appear, under these said circumstances, any one reason of prudence or state policy that opposed those dictates of humanity and justice; on the contrary, there are many reasons of prudence to be suggested in favour of it. And, such being the then small number of poor, two, three, or four substantial householders in each parish, were altogether sufficient to manage and employ those few old or impotent persons, on working up ware and stuff in houses: and likewise to manage the funds that were necessary to maintain them; being probably about a couple of hundred pounds a year, raised in each parish, by a contribution, at the rate of one penny, and at the most two-pence in the pound on real estates. Therefore, this statute was enacted upon these principles of humanity, justice, and prudence; merely as a temporary regulation, properly adapted to the then situation of circumstances.

But will any one suffer himself to be persuaded that these wise legislators meant to bind and tie down either themselves, or their successors, to maintain and abide by those regulations, in the case that the situation of circumstances, to which they were adapted, had or should change, in the manner they have done at this day; when those motives of humanity and justice have so totally ceased, that it would puzzle, as it often doth, the ingenuity of our judges and justices to determine where the settled abode of the greater part of our poor hath been, for forty entire days, in any one parish, at any period of their lives? Or would they have judged it prudent to commit the management and employment of so many hundred thousand settled poor, exclusive of our present numberless vagrant poor, together with the unlimited disposal of so many millions yearly, to such overseers as our's are?

We have good reason to suppose that the circumstances, to which this statute was adapted, did not so far alter, for a long time after, as to demand any alteration of those regulations. But, by the preamble of the 13 and 14 C. II. we find that the poor were beginning about that time to change their settlement, by going from one parish to another, where the poor were better provided: and that, on this account, the said statute was enacted to limit and describe their settlements, and to empower the justices to remove them to the place where they were last legally settled.

The statutes of the three succeeding short reigns denote no great alteration in these circumstances; and, perhaps, no great attention of the legislature to the business itself: their attention having been too much engaged about the disputed succession of the Crown, to regard other matters of national concern. But, in the reign of George the First, we find the legislature turning its attention to the alteration of circumstances that had happened in the Poor System, since the time of Elizabeth; and altering her regulations accordingly. For, by the statute 9 G. c. 7. it was enacted, "That it shall be lawful for two or *more* parishes, townships, or places, to unite in keeping, maintaining, and employing the poor of the several parishes so uniting; and to take and have the benefit of their work, labour, or service."—And it was the same statute 9 G. that provided a remedy for the then arising evil, of maintaining the encreasing poor under the immediate direction of the overseers: and which remedy might, at that time, be sufficient for that evil. But the subsequent total inattention of government to this national concern having suffered the number of poor to so greatly encrease, and that collusion betwixt the contractors and the settled poor to pass unnoticed, is the cause, that this then sufficient remedy hath been productive of those evil consequences that have been mentioned. There were

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likewise other judicious deviations made by this statute 9 G. from that said fundamental statute 43 Eliz.

But ever since the 9 G. we find the attention of government to this important object gradually diminishing and tapering away to an imperceptible point: and at which said imperceptible point it hath stood for these many years past. In proportion as the attention of government decreased, so did the amount of the poor, and their rates, encrease, until it hath arrived to the present intolerable enormity. Though a regard to truth obliges us to confess, what is universally known, that a most unequal proportion of the whole encrease, from the time of Elizabeth till this present time, must be assigned to the present age or reign.

And, seeing the attention of government hath been thus gradually diminishing, ever since the 9 G. so as for some considerable time past to have been totally withdrawn from this weighty national concern, we are to consider the greater part of that space, from the 9 G. to the present time, as a mere *vacuum*, a non-existence of government, in so far as respects our Poor System. And it has been, during the said period, that the situation of circumstances, regarding the amount of the poor and their rates, hath changed in such an enormous degree from that in the time of Queen Elizabeth, as to render an entire change of her system indispensably necessary.

It is likewise necessary to inculcate the three following just observations on this statute 9 G. which thus appears to carry the last marks of any attention paid by government to this poor business.

First, that this said statute commences and sets on foot a very important alteration of the parish poor regulations in the 43 Eliz. and in effect repeals that clause of the 13 and 14 C. II. which subdivides parishes into townships and vills.

Second, that this 9 G. which thus sets on foot that said alteration, was enacted about sixty years ago: at which

which time the amount of the poor and their rates was, most probably, not above a fourth part of what they are at present.

And third, that ever since the 9 G. government hath paid no attention to the Poor System; and that it is owing to this neglect of government, that the total change of Queen Elizabeth's system becomes now indispensably necessary.

The judicious Mr. Burn, in his Justice, remarking the advantages which he had, from experience, observed to ensue from this statute 9 G. through the deviations it had enacted from the single parish regulation of the 43 Eliz. and the repealing that subdividing clause in the 13 and 14 C. II. concludes with proposing, that the legislature should order such a number of parishes or townships to be united or laid together, in the maintaining and employing their poor, as should be thought expedient. And he points out the following advantages, as naturally resulting from such proposal: " 1. Suppose ten townships should be laid together, just nine parts in ten of the squabbles about settlements will be prevented. 2. Nine parts in ten, or if the poor are maintained in separate families, as is frequently done, at least ninety-nine house-rents in an hundred will be saved. 3. Abundance of cottages will be desolated, which now harbour nothing but beggars and thieves. 4. Less common will be destroyed, and wood consumed for fuel. And 5. The poor will be better ordered."—*Burn's Justice*.

These observations from experience, and the proposal formed thereon by Mr. Burn, will be admitted by every one as just. And, proceeding upon his just rule of proportional advantage, it will follow that, according to the degree of advantage that the laying together ten parishes will produce, above the single parish method, so will be the additional proportion of advantage derived from the laying together any number of parishes above ten; even until

that number shall arrive at the utmost limits that his undetermined expediency will admit. And how far that expediency may reach will appear from the sequel.

But it is necessary to observe, first, that since the time Mr. Burn published these his observations and proposal, the amount of our poor, and their rates, have greatly encreased. And, second, that the advantages proposed by Mr. Burn are all of the negative kind, to render the poor less burdensome and noxious.

The extent of this proposal to employ the poor,

And the idle of all descriptions.

The practicability of this proposal.

Whereas it is aimed by the present proposal to render both the settled and vagrant poor, not simply less burthenome and noxious, but nothing burthenome and noxious at all. Nay, to render them, that which nature intended they should be, useful and beneficial to themselves, and thereby, to the community, of which they form a part. And it is moreover meant to comprehend, in this naturally rational proposal, all those unfortunate beings who, many of them from mere distress, occasioned by the want of employ, and others through the before recited neglect and knavery in our police, infest the publick with their depredations; and thereby bring their lives to an end, that is not more disgraceful to themselves, than it is to that publick and their government. Nay, it is likewise proposed to hereby open the gates of humanity, for receiving numbers of the other sex, who, at present, are excluded from all the benefits of society, for no other reason than because nature did not infuse into them the firm virtue of angels; and who, being thus rejected by society, reckon not what they do.

Assuredly, this design is far from being chimerical, or impracticable. Nature never formed any man a thief, nor yet a beggar, unless she made him a cripple: neither was any woman ever born a prostitute. It is circumstances posterior to birth that makes them thieves, beggars, and prostitutes; and no one of these circumstances is such, but that it falls

falls entirely within the power of the community, to direct it either to a good or a bad purpose. We find it easy to break horses, and even asses, to whatever purpose we mean to apply them. Is man in his nature less tractable and docile than an ass? In our practice, it is true, we find it so. The reason is obvious. The master of those animals, having power over them, makes use of that power to break them to his will; whereas, the community, or its delegates, holding exactly the same power over every individual of their community, as the master holds over his animals, does not take the trouble to exert that power in breaking or breeding those individuals to good and useful purposes. It is, moreover, evident, that, as the animals will not labour of themselves, but will, in case their master shall not find them employ, and likewise put them to it, lie idle, and become a noxious burthen to him; so will certain individuals act exactly the same part, if the power of the community shall not be exerted to first find them some good and useful employ, and afterwards to take the trouble of putting them to work on it.

Therefore, according to the laws of nature and reason, the only thing that is wanted to render that part of the community, which is at present useless as the drone, or fell as the tyger and hyæna, useful and beneficial to society is, that the community shall first find out some useful employ, and afterwards take the trouble to put them to work on it.

And, for the truth of this position, I appeal to the knowledge and conviction of every one. For who is he that hath not heard the lusty beggar, when upbraided with his idleness, make this his pathetick moan: "Alas, Sir, I would be glad to work, but I can find none; God help me, what can I do; I must either beg or starve!"—And he spoke truth. But, as starving is a death at which nature revolts, he stole, to save him from starving, and he was hanged for stealing. Or who is he that hath not seen num-

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bers of the other sex drudging most reluctantly, in the beastly, loathsome, and odious slavery of prostitution, merely because they are excluded from any other possible means of supporting life? What medium or alternative hath either of these, betwixt starving and practising these pernicious and detestable modes of subsisting? no one but that of putting an end to their wretched existence by their own hands. A dreadful alternative, which many of them embrace.

What heart so hard as not to feel on considering the horrid situation of such a large part of his fellow-citizens; and, on feeling, not to wish for the power of relieving them?

Not difficult.

But it is not from the want of humanity and feeling that I apprehend danger to this my proposal. Humanity and feeling are large ingredients in the composition of the English people. I alone dread from the want of exertion and enterprise; which, regarding difficulty through the deceitful vapour of long habituated national indolence, sees it in the dreadful form of a chimera, or of a lion in the way. And yet I entertain hope that, when this same dreaded monster shall be brought so near, as that it may be viewed in its true and real form, the pungent stimulus of present hard national necessity, with the cheering cry of hope, and the pity-moving voice of humanity, will, by their united power, spirit us up to encounter it.

For, assuredly, the difficulty of this undertaking, however great it may appear at a distance, will be found but trifling in the execution, provided we shall but once bring ourselves to the resolution of setting about it; and shall begin properly, by digging deep enough for a solid foundation; proceeding afterwards by the regular steps to erect the superstructure.

Example in the Austrian Netherlands.

And, for the purpose of encouraging us to this undertaking, I shall place in our view that example before

before hinted at, of our neighbours, the Austrian Netherlands; who lately undertook, in defiance of many powerful discouragements, to reform abuses of the like nature in their country; and, in defiance of apparently insuperable difficulties and obstacles, effectually accomplished that reform.

For these Austrian Netherlands were as completely unsupported in this undertaking, by any aid from their selfish distant German government, as if they had not had any sovereign government at all. Their country is in a manner overstocked with inhabitants, as may be perceived by a slight glance at it, and at the many great cities standing so near to each other. They have no foreign commerce, nor navigation. Neither have they any sort of manufacture for exportation worth the mentioning, unless it be linen; and the greater part of that is fabricated by the same hands as cultivate the lands. And even ingenuity itself could not find out means of employing a superfluity of hands on agriculture; because the whole country is already in such a state of cultivation, that scarce an acre of waste land is any where to be seen; whilst multitudes of the poor inhabitants earn a livelihood by picking up every thing that can serve for manure. In a country thus circumstanced, where no settled provision was made for the poor, it was excusable; nay, one would naturally expect to find abundance of beggars. And, indeed, ever until this mentioned reform was made, they were so exceeding numerous, that a stranger or a rich inhabitant could not stir abroad without being surrounded by some hundreds of them, who were but badly satisfied with a crown given amongst so many of them. And, where begging was so common, thieving could not be wanting.—There the disease wrought its cure. A simple unknown individual published, some years ago, a rational plan for reforming those abuses: and these discreet Netherlands had the virtue and vigour of mind to undertake it, and the steadiness and firmness

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firmness to successfully execute it, in defiance of all these difficulties and discouragements that have been mentioned. Such of the measures they used herein, as may appear adapted to our circumstances, shall be noticed as occasion offers in the sequel.

Our situation better than their's.

Many means of employing our poor.

Now, upon viewing our case in its very darkest colours, we can scarcely perceive one of those difficulties or discouragements which the Netherlanders had to encounter. For, on the one hand, we may expect every necessary aid from the supreme legislative government, seeing the people themselves hold such a weighty voice therein. And, on the other hand, we abound in the means or subject for usefully employing, not only the whole of our own inhabitants, but a great addition besides.

Indeed, this opinion, that we could usefully employ an addition of inhabitants, seems to be universally received and admitted amongst us: seeing it is common to flatter ourselves with the hopes of great national advantage, from every prospect of any such accession from abroad. A striking instance this of the pliant versatility of human reason; which can pleasingly adapt itself to the most palpable contradictions. For the very same breath that thus wishes for an accession of foreign inhabitants, bitterly complains of the superabundance of our own idle and burdensome poor: and they are idle and burdensome, because they are not employed. Now, if the reason why we do not employ our poor actually is, that we have no field or subject whereon to employ them usefully, it is plain that, in such circumstances, any further accession of inhabitants must only create an addition of weight to that burden, which we already feel too weighty. And if, on the other hand, we can usefully employ an accession of new inhabitants, what reason can we assign for not employing about a fifth part of our present inhabitants? There is but one method of reconciling this universal opinion to our practice, by supposing that these new inhabitants are to come

come possessed of certain members, powers, or faculties, that are wanting to our own present unemployed poor. But, upon a proper system of national enterprise, this contradiction betwixt our reason and our practice would be reconciled. Because, in truth, we are possessed of sufficient field or subject to usefully employ both the whole of our own present inhabitants, and a great accession from abroad.

For we have an active foreign commerce, in articles mostly manufactured by ourselves: which, with our navigation, might be greatly extended, so as to usefully employ a much greater number of hands; provided those manufactures should be relieved from the present oppression of poor's rates, and the high price of labour and provisions. A relief and reduction that must naturally and infallibly ensue, from our properly applying the means in our power for usefully employing the poor.

And the seas on our coasts teeming with fish, so much wanted for foreign markets, as well as for our own consumpt, furnish an ample field for usefully employing a multitude of additional hands.

These, however, do not furnish a subject sufficiently ready for commencing or setting on foot this undertaking, of immediately putting our poor to work. They can only come in as the slow and gradual, though not the less sure and profitable means, of furnishing employ to a future accession of inhabitants, by an increased population; which, particularly of the labouring class, would naturally and infallibly follow, in consequence of changing the state and condition of our poor, in the manner and by the means to be hereafter mentioned.

But neither doth this country stand in want of a subject or field, properly qualified and adapted in every respect to the purpose of immediately putting the poor to work; which was altogether wanting to the Netherlanders; and which will return, from the labour of the poor, a rich recompence to the publick,

lick, for its trouble in putting them to work on it.

Cultiva-
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I mean the improvement or cultivation of waste lands. Not those which are termed Commons; and which are already converted to some good and beneficial use. But those which lie in the very identical state which nature first formed them in; covered with heath and fearn, or in equally unprofitable bogs and morasses: which remain in such state for no other cause on earth, but because the improvement and cultivation thereof is left by the community to the charge of the private owners; who are too much immersed in the expensive pursuit of personal enjoyment, to spare therefrom the expense that is required for the improving and cultivating waste land: and which, therefore, will, under those circumstances, continue to remain in the present state of nature, useless and unprofitable to the inhabitants of the country, unless the community shall, by a spirited effort, undertake to improve and cultivate them itself.

Cultiva-
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ticable.

On this subject, as being somewhat new, it will be excuseable, nay it may be necessary, to use argument, in order to satisfy that part of the community, which here must be termed the publick, that this undertaking, to improve those waste lands, is neither impracticable nor unprofitable. For the publick will not be dragged by force into any undertaking, however plausible; it must be first thoroughly convinced that this undertaking is actually beneficial; and conviction cannot be obtained but through the slow though sure means of sound reasoning.

Now, if a sensible Chinese should be told, that about one fifth part of the inhabitants of England were kept in idleness, from the want of employ, at the expense of many millions sterling, collected from the other four fifths, who were otherwise so burdened with taxes that they can scarce maintain themselves, he would immediately conclude that England was still more overstocked with inhabitants, in proportion to the surface of her soil, than

than his own country: from thence he would infer that every mountain in England was cut out in banquets, as in China, and cultivated to advantage; that the most barren hills were converted to some use; and that the rivers and waters were covered with inhabitants, who earned a livelihood on that element, as in his country: he would pity the English for wanting a sufficiency of soil, proportioned to the number of inhabitants; and he would blame their folly for suffering those useless poor to rear their burdensome progeny. But how would he be amazed to hear, after all this, that above two fifth parts of the large island inhabited by these people lay waste and uncultivated, in a state of nature!

But, in order to more closely evince the practicability and advantage of improving those waste lands, we shall here state those reasons or arguments, which are the only ones admissible, why the inhabitants of any country should, or ought to leave any part of the surface thereof waste and uncultivated: and shall, thereby, take occasion to show, that no one reasonable argument or obstacle exists against the improving our waste lands; but that, on the contrary, reason, as well as national necessity and utility, calls aloud on the publick to undertake this improvement.

The first rational cause why the inhabitants of a country should leave any part of it waste is, the want of hands to cultivate it. But this reason does not exist here, because, besides a multitude of able bodied Settled Poor, we have numberless sturdy vagrant beggars, with many other idle people, who, for want of useful employ, turn thieves.

The second rational argument against cultivation is, that the lands already cultivated furnish every thing that can be produced by the earth, for either the necessity or convenience of the inhabitants. But neither doth this reason exist here, because, besides corn, of which we have frequently of late been obliged to buy great quantities from our neighbours, there are certain

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certain productions of the earth, of which we stand in perpetual want; and which we are obliged to purchase from abroad; not by an exchange of commodities produced, or even manufactured, in our own country, but with hard money. For instance, flax and hemp: the last of which articles is so indispensably necessary to us, that neither our trade and navigation, nor our naval defense, can exist without an annual supply of it: and yet, because we do not cultivate it ourselves, we do not only thus pay away a part of our wealth, but subject the very sources of all our wealth to the power, will, or caprice of other states. And, of this one so indispensably necessary article, such is our yearly consumption, that it would employ nearly our whole number of poor, to cultivate and dress a sufficient quantity of it: the process thereof being adapted to their different strength, sex, and age. But, besides corn, flax, and hemp, there are certain other productions of agriculture, suited to our soil and climate, which we are obliged to buy from our neighbours.

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lands pro-
ductive.

The third reason for letting lands lie waste is, that they are incapable of a profitable cultivation. But, whatever weight this argument may have with indolence, it can in our case bear none with industry. There is no soil on this globe, provided it is in a tolerable climate, as our's is, that cannot by labour and expense be made to produce. We daily see individuals, from motives of necessity or convenience, convert the steep sides of a barred rock into a fruitful garden; and they find their account in it. But the surface here proposed to be cultivated, is not a barren rock: it is, in respect of both soil and climate, superior to those lands which actually do produce that hemp and flax, which we purchase from the barbarous but more industrious Russians. Indeed, a great part of these lands, which lie thus uncultivated, differ but little in soil from those that are already cultivated. For I presume the greater part of the surface of this island was originally covered with heath and fern, or wood.

wood. Yet our fathers have brought above three fifths of it to the present flourishing state of cultivation. If they had supinely sat down, discouraged by the difficulty of breaking in a waste surface, we, their sons, might at this day have been feeding on acorns, hips, and haws. If we shall say that necessity forced them to this difficult undertaking, we cannot surely say that we are at present above that motive. Or, if we should alledge that they took advantage in the choice of situation, that difference is more than made up to us, by the improvements made, since their time, in the science of agriculture, and the tools and implements thereof; not to mention the encrease of national opulence. In fine, the only difference here, betwixt our case and that of our fathers is, that we are more refined, and less industrious than they were. And if so, we had been better without our boasted lights and improvements of human nature, which thus render us less useful to ourselves. For, if we shall proceed at this rate of refinement, we must in a little time be obliged to purchase all our corn, as well as our hemp and flax, from the barbarous Russians.

If we should wish to know the true cause why these lands happen to have been left thus uncultivated, we shall find it, by looking for the time when, and manner how, fresh cultivation came to first decrease, and at last to totally cease in this country. And thereby we shall discover that this decrease commenced towards the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign; being the very time when foreign commerce began to be greatly extended here. For this commerce, having brought great wealth amongst the middling class of people, they began to vie in expence with the great Landholders; and these, in order to preserve their accustomed superiority, launched out in expence, to the utmost extent of their income: whereby they put it out of their power to furnish the expence of improving waste lands. And, therefore, they then began to separate the cultivated from the waste

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waste lands, by hedges and walls; thereby in a manner setting bounds to farther cultivation. For we find in the reign of James the first, towards the beginning thereof, the people rising in arms, under the famous Captain Pouch, to destroy and put a stop to this innovation of inclosing; which they thought portended no good to them, as in truth it did not; for by the stopping of cultivation the poor lost their wonted employ. In proportion as wealth increased by foreign commerce, so did the cultivation of new lands decrease, through the reasons aforesaid: until it arrived at the present pass, that each Landholder considers it as a piece of folly and madness, to deny himself the present enjoyment of his utmost income, by laying out a single shilling of it on the cultivating waste lands, whereof posterity is to reap the only benefit. And at this pass it hath stood for above a century past. This fresh cultivation is now left to the tenants, if they chuse to do it at their own expence; and they have still less means and less interest, and therefore less inclination thereto than the landlords. And, if we look for the causes of the like decrease in other countries, we shall find them to be the same as are assigned here. But, from what hath been said, we may draw the two following certain conclusions: First, That these lands have not been left thus waste, on account of their being incapable of cultivation; but merely because the cultivation thereof having been left entirely to the will of the private owners, they have, through extravagance and dissipation, put this cultivation altogether out of their power. Second, That unless the community shall itself undertake the cultivation of those waste lands, by some such spirited enterprise as is here proposed, they will remain in the same state, useless and lost to the public, so long as the world stands. And surely the delicacy of regard to private property can be no obstacle to the publick in this undertaking; seeing a very small consideration paid to these private owners will be of greater

greater value to them than their present property in those waste lands, which yield them nothing, or what is next to nothing.

The only remaining reason for not cultivating waste lands, is, a want of means or funds to accomplish it. But we want none of those means. Our great improvements in mechanicks, and in the science of agriculture, render it more easy for us, than for any people on earth, to break in waste lands. And with regard to animals of labour for this purpose, we have abundance of them ready prepared, and which will cost the publick nothing, either for the providing or maintaining them. For the bullocks, which we rear at present for no other purpose but slaughter, would serve equally well for the breaking in waste lands as horses: the keep of those bullocks, when at work, would cost little or nothing more than when idle: and after they have become unfit for labour, they are of equal use and value for the knife, as if they had never been wrought. Indeed, the use of these animals for the purposes of agriculture, hath often been recommended by sensible writers, as a great advantage to the publick. And these were the animals, with which our fathers broke in their waste lands, yoked to clumsy ill-contrived tools.

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The want of pecuniary funds, or means to defray the expence of this undertaking, can never exist, as an obstacle thereto, with a people who have never regarded any expense, however great, provided the subject thereof carried the appearance of future national benefit. In proof of this, we might instance the amazing expense, of both money and attention, bestowed on breaking in and improving waste lands in America, which were far more difficult to undertake on a variety of accounts, and inconceivably less inviting in the prospect of return, with regard either to the value, or certainty thereof. And, at home, we might instance Ramsgate Pier, and Milford Haven fortress; with a variety of other expensive undertakings, which

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a very slight consideration might have discovered to be objects capable of very slight return, compared with the expence.

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tax However, even the shadow of obstacle, on account of expence, will disappear, when it shall be considered, that the whole pecuniary fund necessary for this undertaking, in even its commencement, which is by far the most expensive part, is already provided, and ready to apply; without coming upon either the purse or the credit of the publick for any aid or supply. For that enormous tax, which is at present collected under the title of Poor Rates, and applied towards maintaining and holding the poor in that wretched, abject, and slavishly dependent state of existence on the charity of others, thereby rendering them useless in every respect, and a heavy burden to the publick, as well as to themselves; will, when properly applied, completely suffice to put them in a way of earning an honest, independent, and comfortable subsistence, on the value of their own labour and industry; and, thereby, of becoming useful and beneficial to the publick, in a variety of respects; as well as to themselves.

Nor will this appear a vague or groundless assertion, if we shall consider, first, the present amount of this Poor Tax; and second, the manner in which it is at present applied and expended, and shall afterwards compare that, with the manner in which it will be here proposed to apply and expend that tax in future.

As to the present amount of our Poor Tax, the want of a little attention in government hath put it out of the power of any individual to ascertain it exactly: though the foregoing analogical estimate thereof will guide us pretty nearly to the truth; at least as nearly as is requisite to our present purpose. For here it is enough to know, that the present Poor Tax is yearly sufficient, to completely answer and defray every article of expence, that the wisdom of the overseers shall or may think proper, or necessary, for the con-
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cerns of the poor, in their respective parishes, towns, or vills. And whether that may amount in the whole to four, or five millions yearly is not, here, very material.

The same reason prevents our knowing exactly the manner in which the whole of this sum is expended, by these overseers, in their respective parishes, &c. or the particular heads and articles, under which the different parts thereof is accounted for. But neither is this requisite, here, for any other purpose, than as it might enable us to distinguish, and separate, that one part of the whole, which is expended on the actual maintenance or subsistence of the poor, from the other part that is expended otherwise, or on contingencies. However, we are enabled to form some reasonable conjecture at the amount of this *contingent* head; and that will here suffice. The first article of contingencies, consists of the expense incurred, by removing and litigating the settlement of the numerous poor, betwixt all the different parishes, towns, and vills in England and Wales. The nature and manner of that process hath been already described: and the expense thereof will, from that true description, appear to be exceeding great: yet will that appearance, however great it may be, fall much short of the truth, whenever that shall be ascertained. The other article of contingencies we shall term *miscellaneous*; as comprising a variety of expenses incurred by the erroneous nature of our present poor system, by the ignorance, the neglect, and sundry other misapplications of our present overseers, in their several parishes, &c. all over England and Wales. To offer any rational conjecture at the amount of this *miscellaneous* article would damn the credit of the conjecturer. However, we shall risk but little, by estimating these two *litigating* and *miscellaneous* articles of *contingent* expence, added together, at one half part of the whole sum that is collected yearly for poor rates, in England and Wales: and, we shall, of

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course, assign the other moiety, whatever may be the amount thereof, to the really or rationally necessary expense, of maintaining and subsisting the present settled poor.

From what hath been said, these two inferences reasonably follow. First, That all these contingent expenses, being perfectly unnecessary to the actual maintenance or subsistence of the poor, may and ought to be abolished by altering that system of management which causes them. Second, That the abolition of this unnecessary *contingent* expense will create a new fund to the public; out of the savings arising thereby, from the present total amount of the poor's rates.

And this said newly created fund is that which is here proposed to answer all such new and extraordinary expense, as may be caused to the publick by putting the poor to work, above or exceeding that ordinary expense it pays at present for subsisting them in idleness; and of whatever articles this proposed new expense shall consist. And, in order to evince this, I shall present, not an estimate, but a slight sketch or view, of the several articles of expense, requisite to this proposed undertaking of putting the poor to work.

The first of these articles is, animals of labour: and a heavy article this is to the beginning farmer, who is obliged to purchase horses for that purpose: and so it would be, on the same terms, to the publick; as likewise difficult to be procured. But as it appears that bullocks are equally proper for this work as horses, by some thought preferable; and that these bullocks, being ready provided in great plenty, will, after being wrought, completely reimburse the publick for their first cost; there can be neither expense, difficulty, nor delay on this head. We have our idle bullocks ready at once to put to work with our idle poor, without cost for either.

The second article is, implements and tools of culture. And, as these are simple, of small expense, and
speedily

speedily provided, they are scarce worth the noticing to the publick.

The third is, necessary habitations for the labouring poor; and these must be had for them at the expense of the publick, whether they labour or not: though here it may be mentioned, that it might be proper to form them of framed timber, for the purpose of removing with the poor to any new scene of labour.

Seeds for sowing the lands return themselves speedily with encrease.

There will also appear certain salaries for officers in the several divisions, employed on this undertaking; but neither is this an object.

The heaviest article is the pay of the labouring poor. For it is proposed to pay them just wages for their labour, to the end that they may maintain themselves; both because the maintaining them by contract subjects the publick as well as them to many impositions and inconveniences; and also, because the paying them just wages, in proportionable value to the labour of each, will be productive of advantage that will appear in its place. At present we are providing a fund for answering this addition of expense, which the paying wages to the labouring poor will occasion, over and above the allowance they receive at present in idleness; and which present allowance it is proposed to double on their being put to work: that is, if five-pence a day is at present allowed to an able pauper, then to pay him ten pence when at work; and that will satisfy and maintain them, as they will have no house-rent to pay while labouring for the publick. Now, supposing one half of the settled poor should be put to work on agriculture, that addition of their allowance would, at this rate, encrease the amount of the present necessary expense of subsisting the whole settled poor, just one quarter: and, to answer this addition, would require just one half of that newly saved contingent fund, supposing our estimate nearly just; and, in that case,

there would, after this, still remain one half of that contingent fund unapplied.

Nevertheless, it matters little whether that estimate is exactly right or not; because the present calculation is made, merely for the sake of obviating any objections that may be made on the account of expense; by showing that there will be a great sufficiency of funds, from the saving of those contingent expenses which can be easily and effectually done, added to the present necessary allowance for subsisting the poor and, together comprehending the present total amount of the Poor Rates, to answer every pecuniary expense of this proposed undertaking; without calling upon the publick for any additional aid thereto, either in money or credit. And it is the full sufficiency of that ready prepared poor fund, which encourages a hope of the publick's being prevailed on to undertake this enterprize; to which there might, otherwise, have been great objections, in the present distressed situation of the national finances. The possession of such a ready prepared fund for this purpose, is an advantage, and consequently an encouragement to that undertaking, which no one state besides England possesses. She will, therefore, stand singular and unrivaled in this enterprize. Indeed, the situation of England, in this respect, is like to that of an individual, undertaking to work a large arable farm, who is already provided with the heaviest articles of stock, and with plenty of ready money to purchase what he wants besides, to pay his labourers, and to defray every expense: whereas the neighbouring states are in perfect want of all these things.

Now, as the present aim is to prevail on the publick to engage in this beneficial undertaking of cultivation, for which it is thus completely provided in every respect, possibly that object may appear in a more advantageous light, if placed in a contracted and familiar point of view; by supposing the nation

to be in the situation of an individual possessed of an extensive estate in land, consulting with a friend on the present deranged state of his finances; and in particular relating to this poor concern. An account is produced under the title of, Account Expenditure of Sums collected for Poor Rates, in the Year 1782, under the following Articles.—Item. To removing . . . thousand paupers from one parish, town, or vill, to another, some of them three times . . . hundred thousand miles, at . . . per mile, is . . . thousand pounds. Item. To litigating the legal settlement of . . . thousand paupers, at the quarter sessions, and in the court of King's-Bench, with overseers expences attending thereon, attorney's, agents, &c. bills, fees, &c. is . . . hundred thousand pounds. Item. To sundry miscellaneous expences in the management of the poor's concerns, with overseers dinners, perquisites for trouble and attendance, &c. in . . . thousand parishes, towns, and vills, is . . . hundred thousand pounds. Carried out altogether . . . millions. Item. To cash paid contractors for maintaining . . . hundred thousand paupers in . . . thousand parishes, towns, and vills, at . . . pence a head. Carried out . . . millions. Sum total—four or five millions.—Such an extraordinary reckoning would, no doubt, astonish the friend; he would question the squire as to the propriety or necessity of expending those millions on this affair of removing so many paupers from one farm to another; on disputing, at such an enormous charge, whether they should live, at his expence, on this farm or on that; and on these foolish, ignorant, and knavish charges of so many thousand overseers. He would likewise enquire into the meaning of that other single article, of millions paid to contractors, for subsisting so many hundred thousand souls at his cost, in absolute idleness; besides about one million more extorted and stole by vagrant beggars; who, all of

them living thus in absolute idleness, though by far the greater part of them are capable of strong labour, join themselves with other idle persons to rob, plunder, and cut the throats of the honest, industrious tenants; who are, otherwise, so grievously racked in their rents, that they can scarcely subsist themselves.— Surely, the squire would honestly confess that, hitherto, he had been so much taken up otherwise, as never to look into this matter himself; but had trusted every thing to the management of his steward; who, he now plainly perceived, had been minding his own interest so much, that he had never bestowed one thought on his master's concerns.— The friend would naturally advise the squire thus: You have, without doubt, been hitherto grossly abused by this steward; and your affairs have thereby been brought into great distress; but still your case is not desperate: first, you must rely no longer on this steward; begin to look into your own affairs: and, as to this particular matter, you have a great part of your extensive estate lying waste through his negligence, and not fetching you a shilling, though highly improveable: set about improving that waste part of your estate without delay: you have store of bullocks ready reared for your table; these will suffice for the laborious part of the work, without costing you the least expence: the other necessary articles are speedily provided, for a sum that is a trifle to you: and, as for these idle poor, set them immediately to this useful work: and pay them fair wages for their labour, out of this same money that is at present wasted on maintaining them in idleness, and on those other foolish and knavish purposes: you will find that, instead of being an useless, noxious burden to your estate, they will, in a little time, become as industrious and useful as any of your tenants: the annual revenue of your estate will daily encrease; and of course its total value: and plenty, good order, and

and content, over your whole domain, will take place of anarchy, plundering, misery, and despair.

And, truly, what hath been now said, being exactly the case of the nation, would be altogether sufficient on this particular head, did it not become necessary to provide against objections and difficulties that may be started. And possibly one of these may be founded on the expence of paying these present paupers such high wages, out of the publick purse, as it may be termed. But, surely, the case of the publick, in this particular, would differ nothing from that of the farmer, who pays wages to his labourer, and has it returned to him by the cultivation of his lands. Nor doth it make the smallest difference that this labourer, receiving wages, was yesterday a pauper maintained idly without wages, upon a wretched stipulated allowance that still was paid by the publick. For, the moment he is put to work, he changes his condition, from that of an useless miserable wretch, living upon extorted charity, to that of an industrious labourer, subsisting honestly upon wages justly earned, as the fair value of his work. And, for the same reason, that present useless burthensome tax, instantaneously changes its stile, from this of Poor Rates, to that of a fund for improving and cultivating the waste lands in England and Wales. And upon the same fair and reasonable terms, with respect to the publick, would stand all those present idle, able-bodied vagrant beggars of both sexes, who should take to labour: the wages they would in such case receive would be honestly earned, by value in work, to be returned to the publick from the improved lands. Nay, and upon the like equirable terms would stand all such of those who at present live by thieving, plundering, and prostitution: the moment they betake themselves to labour, they become honest citizens, entitled to wages.

But what an honourable and laudable field would this open, to feed those deserving citizens, who have
risked

risked their lives in defence of their country; and who, in return are, at present, turned adrift, to starve or be hanged, the moment their service ceases to be necessary. For, in their present situation, having no possibility of afterwards obtaining an honest employ, their discharge from the army is, in effect, an unavoidable doom to either starve, or to steal and be hanged.

Surely, here is a field ample enough for usefully employing all these, and more, without burthening the publick, so long as there is an acre of waste land in England or Wales capable of cultivation. And, if there is not field sufficient in this end of the island, Scotland holds forth millions of acres, that will liberally return the expence and trouble of cultivation. For the earth is an honest and grateful debtor; she returns the loan, with generous interest. And, certainly, no narrow, confined distinctions of country should be thought of in this case. England would still reap sufficient benefit, notwithstanding Scotland might participate a little; so long as it is colonising within the bounds of the island, it is sufficient: as, on these terms, no ungrateful colonist could, or would attempt to wrest from England the fruits of two hundred years expence and attention.

Here, indeed, it may be invidiously demanded, why the Scotch cannot do this for themselves. The reason hath been assigned: the Scotch have not the fund, nor are they capable of raising one; no, nor any other nation in Christendom besides this. The English alone, who have been insensibly and imperceptibly drilled on, step by step, from small beginnings, to accumulate this poor fund to such an enormous annual amount as now exceeds the standing revenue of almost any one state in Christendom, except herself and France. England alone hath a fund ready provided, and equal to this mighty national undertaking.

* It was commerce which, when pursued to excess and with unbounded avidity, is the bane of industry The true origin of the poor and fund.

* It is to be remarked, that four events, highly interesting to this nation took place speedily after each other, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The extension of foreign commerce, the first enclosing of lands, the first institution of poor's rates, and the first colonising North America by the English. It is also to be remarked, that these three last events were evidently the genuine offspring of the first. For, towards the middle of that Queen's reign, this nation, which, ever till about the end of her grandfather's reign, had carried on all her naval intercourse through the medium of the Hanseatick league, or the Easterlings, and Netherlands, began to enter suddenly, and with a sort of rage, into foreign commerce, and naval undertakings. Seeing, about that period, we find our first nobility and great men engaging their whole estates to raise money for equipping naval enterprises, with the view of wresting from the Spaniards a part of that great wealth, which they were then bringing over from their new discovered dominions in South America. Others of our landed men engaged all the money they could raise in the undertakings of commercial companies, then first instituted; and many again embarked in private adventures. In fine, every one that could raise money, employed it in some way or other that might obtain him a share in the rapid gains of tempting commerce. This universal engagement in commerce and naval plundering, together with that extravagant vying in expence, then likewise first introduced by commerce, put a sudden and total stop to the improving waste lands: insomuch, that the wiser part of the landholders, dreading the effects of this national mania, thought it prudent to secure their cultivated lands from falling back into waste, by obliging their tenants to enclose them with hedges and walls. Though one species of the luxury then introduced by commerce, the more common use of coaches and carriages of pomp and ease, might contribute not a little to that enclosing, in order to breed, rear, and feed the horses necessary to those carriages; and, as pasturing demands fewer labourers than ploughing, this would greatly diminish the wonted employ of the poor on the cultivated lands. So that these two causes, the total stop of employ on cultivating waste lands, and that diminution of employ on even the cultivated lands, did, together, throw great numbers of the poor into idleness and discontent: which, in the beginning of the succeeding reign, broke out into open insurrection, as hath been mentioned. It was the apprehension from those discontents that obliged the then legislature to devise some expedient to furnish a maintenance for those idle poor; and that gave birth first to the statute 39 Eliz. and afterwards

The evil
effects of
commerce
too eager-
ly pur-
sued.

Indigence
and vena-
lity of our
represen-
tatives.

and of the poor, that first created the necessity of instituting this pernicious *Poor Fund* in England; as a substitute for that useful employ, of which it had deprived them. Commerce, that lewd, deceitful, and treacherous sycophant; which, by its golden promises, deluded and decoyed this nation to abandon industrious agriculture as a sordid slow way of acquiring riches; and to devote herself wholly to it: and which, having so prevailed, first stripped her of her virtue, then of her glorious constitution, next of her property, and, finally, of her reputation and good fame. For all these losses happened as natural consequences of that idle extravagance and vain vying in expence, which was first introduced by the riches rapidly acquired through this madly pursued commerce. Seeing that such extravagance necessarily produced indigence, and indigence produced venality. And, notwithstanding the sterner virtue of former representatives resisted the solicitations of indigence, for near a century after that first introduction thereof by commerce; yet, at last, did this offspring of extravagance, the *Auri sacra fames* (what will it not force mortals to do!) prevail on their less virtuous successors to betray that holy trust which, by the constitution, the body of the people commits to a few.

wards to that of the 43 *Eliz.* which ordered each parish to maintain its own poor; as a method which, being more divided, would be less felt and noticed by the publick. And this appears a much more rational and natural cause for the first institution of Poor's Rates, than that which, out of complaisance to former writers, hath been here adopted in our text: even the suppression of the monasteries; which, besides that it happened above sixty years before the date of the 39 *Eliz.* does not correspond with the charitable character of those religious houses.

It was this idleness and discontent of so many poor labourers, that first suggested the design of providing for a part, by sending them to Virginia, then lately discovered, to the famous Sir Walter Raleigh; a man of warm imagination, and pertinaciously determined on executing every project he once conceived. This colonising scheme he actually executed at his own expence; and, notwithstanding that first attempt miscarried, the second succeeded.

few. This sacred trust they brought to market, and, to supply the wants of their idle extravagance, they sold it to the Crown; which they themselves had first vested with the unconstitutional power of paying them for their unconstitutional services, out of the people's own money. It was this their breach of trust that first taught the Crown of this country that monstrous doctrine, *of many made for one*; and to consider the whole body of the people, with all they had, as its own personal property, fairly purchased from their representatives, to be applied alone to the purposes of its pleasure or interest. And they supported the Crown in the actual application of this doctrine, by the same breach of trust. To this we owe a debt of near three hundred millions sterling, entailed upon us and our posterity; which hath been mostly expended upon purposes, wherein the interest of the people was never once thought of; much of it upon purposes noxious to their interest. And to this we owe the late unjustifiable and universally reprobated application of the national strength and treasure; the subsequent humiliating disgraces; and the truly lamentable losses in America. Unjustifiable, because that strength was employed to obtain purposes, that were not more unjust with respect to the natural rights of the Americans, than they were injurious to the true interest of this country. Humiliating, because these disgraces were sustained from a foe so infinitely inferior in power. And lamentable, because this prevailing and insulting foe was our own offspring.

Despot-
ism of the
Crown.

National
debt.

Misappli-
cation of
national
strength.

But it is to be hoped, that the salutary draught of adversity, which this nation hath of late so deeply drank, will dissipate those intoxicating commercial fumes; will recall her reason to a just consideration of the fleeting, precarious, and deceitful nature of commercial riches; and will direct her attention to those true sources of substantial wealth; which, existing at home, do not depend upon the will or power of her neighbours.

Hopes of
a change
from ad-
versity.

The great
resources
of Britain.

neighbours. Of such resources Britain possesses store; and of such a nature as, if wisely, virtuously, and industriously applied, will, together with the remains of her commerce, and the foreign possessions which she still retains, place her in a state, if not so meteorically brilliant as was her late commercial one, infinitely more stable and permanent, and also more desirable on every account. For, abroad, instead of being envied, hated, and at last despised; she will be esteemed, respected, and feared. And, at home, instead of despotism, slavery, and anarchy; she will enjoy her own glorious constitution, with its never failing attendants, generous liberty, and a regular, well-ordered government.

Good effects from
a restoration of
our constitution.

What a wonderful change will this produce in every class and condition of the people? Patriotic honour will take place of base venality in the great: and that national virtue which still continued to exist in the middle-class, and in them only, will be confirmed and enlarged. But what a mighty change would this produce in the lower class, which, though naturally brave, industrious, and ingenious, have, through this commercial oppression, idleness, and indigence, become the most slothful, profligate, and disorderly commonalty in the whole Christian world; and thereby proceeding fast towards utter depopulation and extinction. Whereas, being emancipated from the present slavish dependence, and restored to the means of earning a comfortable, independent subsistence by honest industry, population will revive, and a fruitful encrease of that class, which forms the true strength and bulwark of a state.

Prospect
of such
restoration.

Of such a blessed change we have the happy presaging symptoms, from the late effort made by the people, and their representatives, towards restoring our boasted constitution. For, at the late critical period, when despotism had led us so near to the brink, that but a few steps more must have precipitated us into the

the horrid gulph of perdition and despair, then, at that awful moment, did the good genius of Britain step forth, and with his breath revived in our representatives, the seemingly extinct embers of patriotick fire, which consumed the rotten props of despotism; and substituted in their stead solid pillars of our glorious constitution. They forced, it is true, and pity it is that they had cause to force, against extreme reluctance and the last opposition, into the department of executing the supreme government, a set of men, in whose sincere and hearty disposition to promote the true interest of the people, all the sensible and unbiaſſed part of the nation reposes an implicit confidence; grounded upon this solid and never failing foundation, that their own personal interest must ever lead them to promote all measures for the good of the people, and such only. Their ability and capacity to devise such measures is allowed even by their enemies. And of this ability and sincere intention the people have already seen and felt the good effects.

Neither is this the language of either a sycophant or an incendiary. But it is a doctrine absolutely necessary to the present purpose: because, neither the undertakings here proposed, nor any other undertaking beneficial to the people, can possibly succeed under despotism. It is likewise a doctrine not less amicable and salutary to the Crown, than to the people; because, however long the people of this country may submit, yet, on a supposition that the Crown should obstinately persist to avail itself of the advantage it has gained through their negligence, by prosecuting its own distinct purposes to their detriment, the consequences must assuredly at last be such, as would cause much damage to the one party, and absolute destruction to the other. It is our happiness that we can, at present, look upon any such event as far distant: but as all human things are subject to change, it is a duty we owe to ourselves
and

and posterity, to profit by the occasion now offered; to restore the true spirit of the constitution; which will ever after secure us and them from evils that might, otherwise, most probably ensue under a less virtuous King and Ministry. Such a restoration is not to be effected by violence, or haste, which never do their work well; but by gradually reviving that same virtue, which was never wanting in this country, until the effects of an over eagerly pursued commerce taught us to consider and treat even that constitution itself as a commodity for sale.

Com-
merce be-
neficial in
its own
nature.

Nevertheless, those evils which Britain has thus sustained from commerce are not inherent in the nature of the thing; or consequences inevitably arising therefrom. On the contrary, commerce when pursued with discretion, is ever beneficial to a state, and is one of Britain's great resources; as being useful even to agriculture itself; and indispensably necessary to manufactures; in which Britain excels all the world; and which through that reason will ever remain to her a source of wealth, which even the malice of her enemies can never deprive her of. Commerce only becomes pernicious, when it engrosses the whole attention of a people, and deprives every other object of its due share thereof; and particularly agriculture; which in every country must necessarily be the first object; because it naturally precedes all the arts, including manufactures for exportation, and also commerce; of all which agriculture may be termed the *alma mater*; and she never produces them until after she has plentifully provided for all the wants and conveniences of the whole inhabitants; they must likewise ever after having been so produced, depend upon her for their nourishment; and, for that reason, if agriculture herself shall be neglected, so as not to furnish a sufficient store for these necessary purposes, manufactures and commerce must in time starve. For, though it may happen that a state, which either neglects to keep

Agri-
culture
the sup-
port of
com-
merce.

up a sufficient store of these requisites produced by agriculture, or which does not possess the means of providing them within itself, together with the consequent manufactures, may, through superiour art in navigation, or through the inattention of the neighbouring states, establish a great commerce, and become rich thereby; yet, so soon as that inattention shall cease, this state, which owed her greatness to commerce only, will speedily dwindle into insignificance.

F In

With regard to foreign possessions, Britain still retains one; which alone surpasses in real value to her all the acquisitions that were ever made by any state, not excepting ancient Rome: and which merits every attention this nation or her government can possibly bestow upon it; not simply upon account of its utility to her, but in justice to the deserts of the ingenious native subjects, and still more, in gratitude for their patient acquiescence, for above twenty years, under a government exercised over them through the medium of this nation, so exceedingly oppressive in its nature, and ruinous, as was scarce ever experienced by any other people. And, however excusable this nation may appear to herself, on account of her then want of power to remedy it; yet does she stand highly culpable in the eye of every other state, for her looking indifferently on that total neglect of her then executive government, which hath been the real cause of all those abuses.

The writer of this, having, through residence in those countries, perceived the mighty importance they were of to Britain; and fearing they might be for ever lost to her, through the neglect of government, before he might discover the true value of them, published first in 1770 a small piece, stating the true value and importance of that Indian dominion, and comparing it with the then state of the British dominion in America; his intention therein being, to not only draw the national attention to that individual Indian object, but to withdraw it from the baneful pursuit of those coercive measures in America. And in a second part, published soon after, he endeavoured to point out the danger arising to those Indian possessions from the oppressive nature of the government there; and also from hostile invasion. But it would seem that either he was defective in argument, or the nation in attention, or rather in power to remedy those abuses; and as to executive government, which at that time possessed the whole power, it was too much engrossed by its own pursuits in America, to spare any attention to this object of national interest. About two years after this, when the distressed

Advantages
from re-
storing
agricul-
ture.

In order to effect a change from that slavish, ruinous, impoverished, and debilitated system, that hath been established by excessive commerce, to a system that will produce freedom, prosperity, substantial wealth, with true nervous strength, agriculture must be restored to that share of our attention which nature, common sense, and sound policy require she should hold. And let agriculture be prosecuted until we have not a single demand remaining, that either necessity, convenience, or commerce can obtain from her: till we have not a single acre of waste improveable land remaining in the island; nor a single person idle, through the want of employ.

Our great
wants
from a-
gricul-
ture.

In wants absolutely necessary to existence we abound. For instance, corn (as hath been said) to feed us: and hemp, indispensably necessary to the existence of our commerce, navigation, and naval defence, with flax, and other articles requisite to our convenience. Of waste improveable surface we possess

an distressed state of the company's affairs compelled executive government to make a show of interposing in these matters, he embraced that occasion to deliver into the hands of the then minister, the heads of a plan for establishing, at a very small expense, an intermediate, virtuous, and efficacious check and controul on the power of those intrusted with the powers of executing the government there; and which, being, through the distance betwixt this and that country, altogether unlimited and despotick, furnished them the opportunity of committing those outrageous abuses. The same plan also tended to establish a firm and assured defence of all those possessions, by sea, as well as land. But this plan was framed upon principles that respected only the benefit of the subjects in both countries. And he presumes to think, that if the said plan had been adopted it would have prevented the necessity of a reform at this day, which possibly may come rather late. That minister can best tell whether it was his poverty of power, or his will, that induced him to reject this, and bring forward another plan, if indeed it deserved any such name, calculated upon principles directly opposite; and which he could not fail to know, as having been informed, that it must be productive of the very mischiefs that have actually ensued from it.

an amazing extent, upbraiding the owners with their want of industry. We have numbers of inhabitants begging for employ, to rescue them from misery, indigence, slavery, and depopulation. And we have bullocks, which are rearing in idleness for the slaughter, and only await our order for going to labour.

Finally, to set all these a-going, and to begin the work, we have ready prepared, what no other nation possesses, a fund of money incredibly great; which extravagant commerce had instituted, and applied to purposes that were pernicious, ruinous, and repugnant to nature; but which, the moment it shall be applied to the use of agriculture, will change its nature in all these properties, together with its name.

And in this following direct and immediate manner, (exclusive of accessory channels,) and in this proportion, will substantial wealth flow in upon this land, by thus cherishing agriculture. For every thousand pounds which we at present send abroad, to purchase any one or more articles that are produced by agriculture, whether for necessity or convenience, just so many thousand pounds will be saved, and therein gained, by producing the like quantity of the same articles of agriculture at home. And every thousand pounds worth of any articles that may be wanted abroad, such as corn, produced by us, exceeding our own necessary consumpt thereof, will, when exported, bring home so many thousand pounds in substantial money. For corn is an article that, (according to the late true doctrine of the American *common sense*,) will never fail of a market, so long as eating is in fashion. A doctrine of which they have experienced the truth and benefit in Europe, ever since Britain left off growing that necessary article for exportation.

And if we wish to make these ungrateful colonists feel the weight of our resentment, we have here the opportunity of doing it effectually, by this rational

Pecunia-
ry gain
by agri-
culture;

by ex-
porting
corn.

and honourable method, of cutting them out of this boasted resource; which they owe, not to their own wisdom, policy, or industry; but to the same source from which they derive all their other advantages; the fostering care of Britain; which withheld and restrained them by her laws from entering, during their childhood, into arts and manufactures; which are only proper for a state when grown to maturity; and encouraging them by her premiums and bounties to adhere to agriculture. This it was that furnished to these poor emigrants from Britain, those sources of substantial wealth, those armies of robust, hardy, and brave peasants, together with the courage and confidence in these, to beard the apparently irresistible, but actually enervated power of their parent; enervated and weak through the means and in the hands of despotism, and to baffle it too.

Great
abuse of
carriages.

But, before we shall have an opportunity of going to market with this necessary article, we must first provide for our own wants thereof at home. Wants occasioned by that most idle, fantastical, and absurd piece of luxury, which was first introduced in a small degree by the rapidly acquired riches of commerce; but which, though so easily remediable, hath, through the inexcusable neglect, to call it no worse, of our ever till lately omnipotent executive government, proceeded to an excess that is almost incredible. I mean the present extravagant use of coaches and carriages of pomp and ease; which are become so ridiculously common, that even our Chimney-sweepers, our Lamp-lighters, and our Gingerbread-bakers, keep their carriages of state and ease; thereby debilitating and ruining themselves, and distressing their families; who are deprived of the absolute necessities of life, in order to furnish this luxurious expense; which becomes more necessary to the keeper than meat or drink; because his neighbour, who keeps such a carriage, would otherwise gain a *pas* above him in grandeur and consequence.

Now,

Now, the injury done to the community, by the universality of this carriage keeping, is inconceivable. For, as each of these carriages demands at least one, others two, and some of them four horses; the number of these horses becomes so great upon the whole, that to breed, rear, and maintain them demands nearly half the produce of our cultivated lands. And from thence it happens that, instead of exporting three or four hundred thousand pounds worth of corn, which we did yearly till after the beginning of this present reign, we have of late been necessitated to send abroad a sum nearly equal to that; not in the ideal riches of commerce, but in hard money, for the purchase of corn to feed the infatuated inhabitants. Besides that this pasturing, instead of ploughing, has thrown multitudes of the poor out of employ upon the parish.

This is an abuse that, to reform it, requires only the simple *fiat* of the legislature to a tax on those carriages, sufficiently weighty to oblige the keeper, either to lay down his pernicious machine, or otherwise to pay the community an equivalent for the damage he does by keeping it. This too is a tax most just to both parties, seeing it affords a choice to the keeper; and, which ever of the two ways he shall take, the community will be a gainer, either by an encrease of corn, or of revenue. And many of the carriage keepers themselves would be glad of such an honourable opportunity, without sinking below his neighbour, to get rid of an expence that obliges him to want many real necessaries. And this would also bring that other advantage of finding useful employ for a number of the present idle poor.

Neither need the landholders or their tenants apprehend any damage to their interest from such a change in the cultivation of their lands. Because, so soon as there should arise therefrom a surplus of corn above our own wants, the publick would gladly, for a variety of reasons, indemnify them still more li-

The
horses
consume
half our
produce.

To be re-
formed by
a heavy
tax.

Such a
reform
not hurt-
ful to the
landhold-
ers.

Advantage to them by suppressing the poor's rates.

Advantages by growing hemp and flax on waste lands.

berally than in former times, by granting a bounty on the exportation thereof. In the mean time, they would reap their share, along with the community, in the advantages that would arise from it; more particularly in that which would be derived from an abolition of the Poor's Rates, which fall mostly on the lands; being equal, in many parishes, to one third part of the tenant's rent. And this change in the mode of cultivation would immediately alleviate a part of that heavy burthen, by finding useful employ for a number of the poor, in the manner mentioned. Whilst the total abolition of that grievous tax would speedily follow; provided the remainder of the poor shall be employed in cultivating hemp and flax on the present waste lands; and these are articles which, it is presumed, would appear the most eligible to the publick, for other reasons, besides this of a just tenderness to the interest of the landholders and their tenants; in consideration of their having been the greatest sufferers by the heavy expence of our late mad despotical pursuits.

For hemp, being an article of agriculture perpetually and totally purchased from abroad, and so indispensably necessary to the existence of our commerce, navigation, and naval defence, it would appear sound policy to grow an article of that nature at home; and thereby to rescue the existence of such important objects from the will and caprice of foreign states*, as well as from the risks of importation in the

* This would likewise afford to Britain an opportunity of honourably and feelingly retaliating upon a neighbouring state, the ungrateful insults and injury she lately received from it; in return for having poured into it, during a long series of years, such large sums of her wealth for this article; and for many other acts of long continued social friendship and liberality. But which state, on the late occasion, when Britain was struggling for existence against a combination of mighty foes, instead of assisting her, did not simply laugh at her calamity, but was the leader in forming a powerful confederacy, for the purpose of treacherously stabbing her to the vitals.

the while of war; in preference to growing corn for exportation. And, on this head, we may call to mind the great premiums paid so liberally by Britain to her then colonies, on the very grounds here mentioned, to encourage their growing hemp and flax.

Hemp and flax, likewise, happen to be articles that, by the dressing thereof, would furnish useful employ, after being grown, to that part of our present idle poor, which wants sufficient strength to assist in cultivating the waste lands. And also would furnish the rational means of chastising, correcting, and amending such of our idle and disorderly inhabitants, as may require such chastisement; who would, no doubt, be exceeding numerous at the commencement of a reform; and whom we absurdly enough, at present, pretend to chastise, by putting them to dress hemp, which we import ready drest.

What hath been said on this head will not be considered as a presuming to prescribe or judge of the most proper manner for employing those waste lands. That is the province of wiser heads, and stronger hands. Besides, that time and experience, which are the wisest counsellors of all, will, in the course of the execution, suggest many things that may not occur beforehand. All that is aimed at, by what hath been or may be said here, is only to evince the rationality and practicability of such an undertaking, in order to engage thereby the approbation and consent of the publick.

And, with this view, I shall enter a little nearer into the calculation of the immediate advantage, or profit, that might accrue to the publick by cultivating hemp and flax on these waste lands. And will suppose that so much waste should be cultivated, in the course of the first year, by the labour of our present idle poor and idle bullocks*, as would produce, in

A calculation of profits from cultivating waste lands.

F 4

the

* If it should be deemed advisable to join some few horses along with the bullocks in that labour, the publick might be supplied

the following year, hemp and flax, to the amount of twenty thousand pounds, after being dressed; in such case, the publick will have thereby gained from the waste, which is all clear gain, a property equal in value to four hundred thousand pounds; being at the rate of twenty years produce or purchase. And this too will be a solid and permanent acquisition, no way subject to the envy or caprice of its neighbours, or to any other casualties. And to this amount there would be an acquisition, still greater in proportion, made every year after: as the beginnings of all undertakings are the most difficult, as well as the most expensive, and the least profitable; particularly an undertaking of this nature. And, if there should not be a quantity of land improved equal to this estimate, then it must be owing to my having over-rated the number of our present unemployed hands. And if this should be the cause that a less value of land should be gained from the waste, then would the expence of the publick, in paying for the labour of those poor, be proportionably less.

Additional
profit.

But this value in produce, so received by the publick, is not the whole immediate profit that would accrue from such cultivation of waste lands. For that said sum is what, in a calculation of farming as this is, though of a publick nature, may be termed the landlord's rent. Whereas, it is a known rule, that a tenant must, in order to live, make two more such rents or sums out of his lands; the one to maintain himself and family; and the other to make good his expence, being mostly for manual labour. And therefore as, in this publick undertaking, the working poor would stand in the stead of both the tenant and his labourers, these two last mentioned sums, or rents, being together equal to double the value of whatever shall be so received yearly by the publick, must be carried to the credit of the poor account; and

supplied with horses readily, and at a cheap rate, by means of the before mentioned heavy tax on carriages of ease.

and will act, to that amount, in diminution of the present poor tax. That is to say, supposing the publick should receive in value, by one year's produce of those lands, the sum of twenty thousand pounds; then must the publick further save out of the present poor tax (equal to so much gained) the sum of forty thousand pounds. And these two sums, making sixty thousand pounds, would the publick gain directly by this means in that year: and so on, in a much greater proportion to the annual expence, for every year afterwards; so long as it should be found practicable to continue the like number of poor labourers in this species of publick employ. And in a proportion as the number of those publick labourers should diminish, so would the expence in paying their wages diminish*.

But still, and notwithstanding any such diminution of profit arising from a diminution in the number of the poor employed on this species of labour; yet would not this diminution of profit in that particular way, which is only to be considered as a means of putting the present idle poor into a way of subsisting by industry, create any diminution of that benefit which the publick would reap from such a generous and useful undertaking. Because it will be effectually provided, in the sequel, that none of them shall fall back from this publick labour to idleness; and, for that reason, when they shall, at any time, quit the publick labour, it must be only to exchange it

The labourers allowed to change their employ.

* Here it may be suggested that, amongst other good effects, it would operate as an incentive to industry and frugality in the poor, if these lands, so fast as they shall be so improved, should be leased, in small farms of a plough-land each, to tenants chosen from amongst the poor themselves, by the recommendation of the overseers or bailiffs, who would be the best judges of their qualification in the above respects. And, as these poor tenants might be incapable of stocking a farm on their own credit, the publick could interpose its credit in their behalf, without any risk, especially if these poor tenants should be properly chosen; because the very stock, so purchased, would ever exist a pledge for repayment of such loan,

it for some kind of private labour or employ. And they cannot possibly employ themselves in any private work, that will not be of a nature still more beneficial to the community, than was their working in that publick employ. For this very reason, they should not be restrained from changing their publick, for private employ: on the contrary, such exertion to change their situation should be encouraged, as the dawning of useful industry; and tending to reduce the present high price of labour: as also to stock, imperceptibly, and without any interposition of the publick, our manufactures, our navigation, and our fishery. For these, together with private agriculture, are the only ways that, under proper regulations, would afford the labouring poor any opportunity of changing their first situation.

And agriculture is a labour of such a nature as will furnish the means of creating such a spirit of exertion in those labourers; provided proper overseers or bailiffs of skill and activity should be chosen, to keep them hard at work; and still more if, as a penalty on idleness, they should be proportionably mulcted in their daily pay; which, for this and other good reasons, should be no greater than will just suffice to properly maintain them. For here, seeing they would, as shall appear, possess no other possible means to fill their bellies, besides their exact earnings in the publick employ, hunger, an irresistible argument, is employed to enforce industry. And, it is evident, that this hard labour and small pay would stimulate them to better their condition, by getting into private employ.

Advantages
there-
from.

But this plenty of labourers, together with these other means hinted at above, would tend to effectually remedy another great evil, the cause of much inconvenience and disorder in the country, and which is reprobated by foreigners; namely that ferocious, insolent, and disorderly deportment of our commonalty, and labouring class; who, if their employers shall

shall presume to reprimand them on the most just ground, either do, or threaten to quit their employ; as being confident that they can readily find the like employ elsewhere; otherwise they have a parish that is bound to find them; or, at the worst, thieving and begging are never failing resources here. On the other hand, the master, being conscious of this their strength, and afraid to attempt a change, which he knows by experience will not better his condition, is obliged to patiently put up with every insult or injury; and thereby becomes the slave of his hireling's humour. And these again, having thus subjected their own master, who still is with them the greatest man in the world, can we be surpris'd that they should exercise a still greater degree of insolence and ferocity on all others? These are the true causes of a disposition which is commonly, though erroneously, assigned to nature and climate; but, by beating them out of these their strong holds of insolence and ferocity, they will soon be reduced within the bounds that are necessary to the good order of society.

But first it becomes necessary to complete this part of our purpose relating to the publick. On which head, it still remains, to present a cursory glance at the manner in which this general undertaking may be most properly divided into parts. For it is evident that, if the whole undertaking should be placed under one general management, it would be too unwieldy, and thereby come to be neglected, as the business of every body; or possibly it might be made a job of. And, on the other hand, if it should be divided into parts too small, there is danger of its being starved, through the want of sufficient means. But here again it is proper to repeat that, nothing further is intended here, than what may suffice to evince the rationality and practicability of this undertaking at large.

It is natural to suppose, that the management of such an undertaking might be most properly divided into

counties.
into

into counties: each county to direct the employment of its own poor, together with the funds, on such subjects as shall be judged the most proper and advantageous. As such a partition of the whole would neither be so large as to occasion listlessness; nor too confined for subject of employ, for necessary funds, nor for wise and able counsel to direct and manage it.

But as some counties, and particularly those nearest the metropolis, may either be deficient at the outset, or speedily exhausted of subject, in the way of agriculture, for putting their poor to work, it might be so devised, that such deficient county should transmit such part of its idle poor as it cannot employ, together with a sufficient proportion of its present poor fund, to such other county as may abound in subject. For a transmission of funds along with the poor would be necessary at first, to set the work a-going; but would soon cease to be necessary. Exact accounts of the pecuniary expence incurred by each county on this head to be kept, for the purpose of afterwards adjusting that account, either betwixt the respective counties, or with the publick at large, as might be determined.

A county
board.

Each county would require a board, composed of proper persons holding property, and residing therein, to direct and manage the undertaking in that county. And at the head of this board should preside the justices of the county: at least, it would be requisite that the heads of this board should be justices of the peace: which, in this case, would be altogether proper; seeing the justices would no longer act as judges in disputed settlements betwixt the different parishes, towns, and vills of the county. But it is evident, that our present innumerable titular justices cannot discharge the duty required here; which, with the other part of their necessary duty, would demand their whole time, attention, and utmost exertion. The justices wanted here must be
such

such acting justices, as have been described in the first part. And to these, with the honorary justices, might be added, at this board, a certain number of gentlemen properly qualified in each division; the whole Board to meet as often as may be necessary at the outset; in order to provide and prepare every thing requisite for setting on foot the undertaking in their county; such as fixing on the most proper subject for employ; purchasing waste lands, if necessary, from the private owners, at the most reasonable valuation; the principal price to be paid at a reasonably distant period; and in the mean time interest thereon: to chuse or appoint proper Bailiffs or Overseers, with regard had to their skill, activity, and steadiness, for the reasons before mentioned: to provide the necessary animals of labour, with the proper implements of culture, &c. The acts and resolutions of this board to bind the whole county.

A treasury establishment for the whole county will be necessary; composed of proper persons, with adequate salaries, to be chosen or appointed by the Board; and acting under its orders, inspection, and direction. This office to receive, so long as it shall be necessary, the whole fund that may be collected under the name of poor's rates, in each parish of the county; and which may be so collected by the Church-wardens, or any other of the inhabitants, under any one denomination, but that of Overseers of the Poor. For these would, by the establishment of this general treasury, be annihilated and abolished, along with their long accounts of contingencies, of removals, and litigated settlements; amounting in the whole to above one half of the present poor fund, as hath been shown. The new collectors of this fund in every parish, to take proper receipts for every payment they should make into the general office; and that office in like manner to take receipts for all its disbursements. The books of assessment and collection in each parish, for as many years back as might be judged

A general
Treasury
Office in
each
county.

A Secretary.

judged necessary to be submitted to this general office.

—A secretary, with one or more clerks would be necessary to the General Board.

This is a slight sketch of the way and manner in which a publick undertaking, to put the poor at work on the cultivating waste lands, may be carried into execution, by means of the present enormous poor fund, without calling upon the publick for any further assistance. And it is hoped, that even from that slight sketch, such an undertaking will appear not simply practicable and rational, but actually productive of the several great national advantages here held forth. It hath been said that the weaker part of the poor may likewise be furnished with useful employ from the same undertaking, so as to subsist themselves, and thereby ease the publick of the burden of maintaining them; all except the really impotent. But the particular consideration of this last part will fall in afterwards.

Suppression of beggary.

It remains to point out the manner in which this said undertaking would operate towards the suppression of beggary and theft.—With regard to beggary, that would be completely suppressed and annihilated, on the very day when the publick should issue notice, that wages or subsistence was ready to be given to all the poor, who should repair to a certain specified place in each county, there to be employed. For such notice would immediately cut off that only plea or means which the poor employ at present, successfully, because truly, to draw liberal alms from the tender hearted rich, “That they cannot find employ, and must either beg or starve.” But, in such event, no one would be so infatuated as to give his money, for the evident purpose of prejudicing himself with the community. And, when alms-giving ceases, begging will cease of course. This was the method used by the Netherlanders for suppressing beggary. They, under great difficulties, as hath been mentioned, issued public notice that proper employ was provided for the

the poor, and that all such as were willing to work might receive subsistence: though the more to reinforce weak minds, they imposed a penalty on all such as should give any private alms. And, since the day that such publick notice was issued, not one beggar has ever appeared in those streets, which, but the day before, were so crouded with them.

The same undertaking and notice would operate with equal effect, in suppressing theft, with every other disorder; provided that our trading justices should be first suppressed; and justices, of the description given in the first part, should be substituted in their stead: for that is a condition without which there can be no reform of this or any other abuse. And in such case, these justices, each in their respective districts, attended by their constables, and certain properly informed inhabitants in each parish, should visit every one house within such district, omitting none, but more particularly examining such as are of a suspicious reputation; and there minutely enquire and register the name, age, sex, condition, way of life or employ, of every individual residing therein, either constantly or casually. (The Netherlanders lettered and numbered each house on the outside in their great cities, for the sake of exactness in their register.) All such as should on this visitation appear to be idle, or without an useful employ, or disorderly, should be served with an order or ticket, to be delivered by him or them at the proper office, which is to provide employ for the poor of that county; such tickets to be entered there, and a report returned thereof to the respective justices. These visits of the justices and their attendants being frequently repeated at the beginning, it will be impossible that any one idle or disorderly person should escape notice. And, if it should be discovered by the returns, that any one or more persons had not delivered their order at the proper office, then diligent search should be made after such persons, in order

order to send them to the house of correction. But these are not to be such houses of correction as our present parochial ones are; they being indeed a ridicule upon that useful institution.—The houses of correction here meant are such as those that were built by the Netherlanders, by them termed *Maisons de Force*, at the common expence and for the use of a whole province, equal to a county with us.

A county
house of
correc-
tion.

This county-house of correction must needs be a considerable edifice; surrounded with high walls; for the purpose of preventing escape. It should be properly separated into two divisions, to thoroughly prevent the communication of the two sexes. And each of these two divisions may be subdivided into two or more apartments, to separate the different degrees of offenders: for a common mixture of these is much against reform. The virtue of this institution will depend considerably on a proper choice of the officers who are to conduct and govern it; and who should be men of a firm and resolute mind, without brutality. A strict and exact subordination in office will be there as requisite as in a garrison straitly besieged. And, as the government and regulation thereof would be different, both in its nature and purposes, from that of the community, a sort of discretionary power might be properly vested in those officers: acting, however, under the controul and frequent inspection of the justices in the county. The publick to be admitted by a ticket from the justices to visit and inspect the manners of the house: but to be strictly prohibited from giving money, meat, or drink to the confined.

Method
of cor-
recting
and re-
forming
offenders.

As the rational object of this institution is, not to punish, but to correct, amend, and reform the peccant part of the community, so as to dismiss them orderly members of society, the grand consideration here is, to chuse the means most proper to produce that effect. As to hard labour, in dressing hemp or otherwise, it is both just and rational; as thereby the offender

offender will be made to earn his own subsistence without burthening the community, and also to make some atonement for the offence he has committed: but, in the way of reform, that operation will work but slightly. Far less will whipping, or any such bodily torture, serve to reform nature, or evil habit. To effect a change of that kind, the mind must be wrought upon, as well as the body, by art; in the like manner as we see it successfully used on the animals which we stile brutes. It is not by whipping and torture that man subdues nature in the mighty elephant, when brought within his power. No! Torture would but enrage him to make mire of the wretched keeper beneath his weighty foot, or to dash out his soul by a stroke of his proboscis. But it is art that tames him. He is made to feel the power of irresistible hunger: food is held out to him, on condition he will submit to the will of man; otherwise not. Less than a month suffices to change his nature: he bends his stubborn knee to receive the puny animal upon his lofty back: at first he stalks sullenly along: but ever after he willingly obeys the voice of his rider: and he will risk his life in defence of his feeder. It is this art that teaches the strong and fierce lion to lick the hand of man, whom nature destined for his prey. And, by these means, is the towering falcon brought to seek the lure, which she once shunned. And if one month of such discipline can suffice to change nature herself in the most mighty and ferocious animals, will it not suffice to change evil habit in human nature; where, reason being more acute in its feelings, the passions of hope and fear are more easily and effectually wrought upon?

Yet, if we were to reason from the nature and success of our practice on the English commonalty, we should conclude, that they were of a nature more viciously indomitable than the elephant, the lion, or even than the tyger. Seeing that, to restrain them

Present
cruel
treatment
of the
English
common-
alty.
from

from theft and other disorders, every experiment of power and art hath been tried in vain; by cruel imprisonments under each hardship that nature, human or brutal, is capable of feeling, in goals and in justitia galleys, by banishment, and by numerous brutal executions every year: yet still the evil increases; all our goals are overglutted; and half the British navy, converted into justitia galleys, would scarce suffice to contain all our English penitents, unless the law, ashamed to discover the nakedness of the land, did strain a point to dismiss above one half of the guilty that are brought before it, by even our knavish and negligent magistrates. In fine, under our present practice, there appears no effectual remedy against thieving and these disorders, but by extirpating and exterminating the breed of English commonalty.

English
common-
alty vin-
dicated.

But, in vindication of human nature, and particularly of our commonalty, I shall undertake to show that this want of success in our practice is not owing to the indomitable savageness of their nature, but to the irrational, slavish, and tyrannical methods that have been practised upon them, by the most despotic government*, and through that very reason, the most unfeeling and unrelenting government that human nature was ever subjected to. And this true statement of their case will, by showing the cause and

* Whoever is acquainted with the nature of the British constitution must know that, under certain possible or probable circumstances, that constitution presents to a King of Britain the means or opportunity of assuming a power over the people, more absolute and uncontrouled than the King of any other country can possess; because this constitution alone presents a screen to such King against the resentment of the people, on account of any abuse committed by him in the exercise of that despotic power. Prudence, therefore, calls upon the people of Britain, above all people on earth, to be cautious of presenting to their Kings the opportunity of assuming such power, which most Kings are watchful to catch at, *Quid non Regalia pectora cogis potentiae sacra fames?* Because such unlimited power vested in any human being, who, by his situation, is placed above the feelings of other men, must be productive of horrid effects.

and nature of the disease, at the same time point out the nature of the remedy. For a remedy there is; an efficacious, and an easy one.

It hath been shown, how and in what manner the poor or commonalty of this country first came to be deprived, in a certain degree, of their wonted means of subsistence, through that extravagance and indigence of the great, first introduced by unbounded commerce. It hath likewise been shown how that indigence and consequent venality of the great first led them to vest the Crown with an unconstitutional power; as also, how the Crown, in order to confirm and extend that unconstitutional power over the people, promoted luxury amongst them, instead of discouraging it; and particularly that mentioned species of luxury, carriage-keeping; which, by converting our formerly arable lands into pasture, did thereby further increase the distress of the poor to the present state, when above one half part of our commonalty is altogether void of employ. It hath been further shown, how a generous publick, desirous to relieve that distress of the commonalty so far as it had power, subjected itself to a tax, which, in its present amount, exceeds the standing revenue of most states. But even this generous bounty of the publick hath been diverted from the use of the poor, by that same government; which, assuming to itself the whole power of directing this, in like manner as every other publick fund, hath employed it in such a manner, as that the poor have received little or no benefit or relief from it: seeing that, as hath been shown, one half of this enormous bounty hath long been, and still is, wasted upon purposes that do not in any sense or construction tend to the relief of the poor; and the other half is, through the same management, wasted in such an idle, irrational, and intolerably tyrannical manner in parish work-houses, that a great part of those poor who are, by the law, entitled to participate in that publick bounty,

reject it upon these slavish terms; and rather chuse to join themselves with that other part of their wretched community, who, being excluded by the law from all participation in the publick bounty, are placed in the state of unavoidable necessity, to subsist life, by the only means, of either *begging* or *stealing*.

Of this said truly wretched class of our commonalty, happy are those whom nature, fortune, or art, hath gifted with the means of exciting the compassion of a still generous publick; which, notwithstanding its being burthened otherwise with such a grievous tax collected for the pretended purpose of relieving the poor, yet being in some shape conscious that this fund is somehow grossly misapplied, still opens its hands liberally to retrieve the manifest distress of vagrant beggars.

With regard to the remaining part of this legally unprovided class of our unemployed commonalty, which is not qualified to obtain a subsistence by vagrant begging, and which is, indeed, exceeding numerous, they stand literally and absolutely in this unavoidable predicament, without any sort of alternative or choice, either to *steal* or *starve*. And this great number of our thus desperately situated commonalty is still further increased by another abuse of our government, that hath likewise been mentioned; the committing the execution of our laws, and the preservation of our peace and good order, to those infernal trading justices; who, instead of preventing or discouraging those crimes, actually do promote and encourage them, by holding forth safety and impunity to all such as, by dexterity and success in the practice thereof, shall be able to gratify the avarice of the magistrate. And every one individual who shall, through such encouragement, once enter into that path, is, under the present circumstances, as effectually and irretrievably cut off from all possibility of

of quitting it, as those others are, whom necessity did originally force into it.

When we shall duly consider and allow their just weight to those two causes of theft, we shall readily account for the present great abundance of thieves and disorderly persons in this country, otherwise than by assigning it to a naturally vicious disposition in our commonalty. And when we shall, in like manner, weigh the nature of that cause which chains and rivets them down to a continuation of those crimes and disorders, we shall be enabled to account for the want of success in all those methods that have been employed by our government to reform them, without assigning it to the indomitably savage disposition of that commonalty. For, in plain language, what is the vice that government attempts to reform, or what is the crime it so cruelly punishes in our commonalty? The answer is plain and ready. Their vice is *hunger*: and their crime is the gratifying that irresistible demand of nature, by the only possible means in their power, *stealing*. Can reason or humanity suppose that goals and justitia galleys, with all their tortures, can cure the vice of hunger? Hanging is indeed a most effectual remedy for that vice; and it is the only effectual remedy in our whole present system of practice: and, for that reason, if this same system must needs be continued, that so only effectual remedy ought to be alone made use of and applied, untill there shall not be left remaining one single thief, that is to say, one single unprovided or unemployed poor person, in all England. And upon these terms, the sooner that only effectual remedy shall be applied, the better it will be, both for these poor sufferers themselves, and for the rest of the community. It is a clear case that they, who, possessing the whole powers of government, together with such a fund, have so long employed those horrid and barbarous methods of reforming theft and other such

disorders in our commonalty, are such as never felt either *hunger* or *humanity* *.

But a generous and humane publick will certainly no longer sit passive, and behold the commonalty thus starved, tortured, and hanged into utter extermination; more particularly as this publick is already possessed of the natural and effectual means to remedy all this, without putting itself either to trouble or expense. For, what is the natural and effectual remedy for *hunger*? Food. And what is the natural and effectual means to prevent either man or beast from stealing food? To give it them voluntarily. And it is clearly evident, that it would cost the publick not a shilling of expense to thus furnish necessary food, through the channel of useful employ, to those poor wretches; not only, because the aforesaid bounty or poor tax would alone, if properly applied, suffice to pay and employ all our present idle poor of every description; but also, because it will appear that, provided the publick shall thus be prevailed on to hold forth, to these present idle and through that disorderly part of our commonalty, the means of subsisting honestly through labour, either upon the subject here proposed, or on any other subject that shall, upon consideration, be deemed more proper, the publick will, by their accepting this proffer of pay and labour, save a very great expense which it at present pays to government, for the purpose of so torturing and hanging those same wretches, without producing the desired effect: an expense which, if it should be so saved, will nearly suffice of itself to pay and employ all those present thieves and plunderers.

And that this said expense may and can be thus saved is evident; provided the publick shall thus hold forth

* Our truly respectable judges must often, upon the criminal bench, feel the hard conflict which this present mode of practice causes in their breasts, betwixt *justice* and *humanity*!

forth pay and employ to the present idle, disorderly poor, and shall at the same time change and reform our present corrupt and knavish or useless Justices of the Peace, in the manner here proposed. For, within less than one month after publick notice shall be given of such pay and employ to be had at a specified place in each county, above two third parts of those who at present infest us with their depredations will have voluntarily repaired to honest labour: more especially, because they will speedily be made sensible, that the newly established active and vigilant magistracy will not permit them to subsist, or exist longer in idleness, by robbing, stealing, or housebreaking. That there will remain some few, so hardened, by that said long continued abuse of government, as not to hearken immediately to the voice of reason, must be expected. But these too will be speedily corrected, amended, and reformed, in a properly constituted House of Correction, through that rational mode of discipline which, as hath been shown, suffices to subdue nature in the strongest and fiercest animals, within the space of one month; and which, being applied in the like rational manner, will, in less time, send forth the most hardened, desperate, and profligate of our thieves, reformed and changed into honest, sober, and industrious citizens: and there can be neither reason nor justice in confining them beyond such period. For that reason, their sentence of confinement should never be limited to any certain specified time: that should be left open, a blank to be filled up in the future, at their own option, or according to their own behaviour; *quamdiu se male gesserint*; and to be determined by the voice of the government of the house itself, sanctioned by the approbation of the visiting justices in the county. A choice this, fit for rational beings; and highly conducive to reform; as it works upon the subjects hopes and fears; those all powerful movers of the human will and actions.

And these, being dismissed thus reformed, not on the footing as they are at present from our gaols and justitia galleys, to again steal or starve, but upon the practicable, rational, and just terms of work and pay, will most probably continue honest and industrious citizens, for all their lives after: holding ever before their eyes the utter impossibility of escaping for even a week the watchful eye of vigilant magistrates; and that the certain consequence of being detected in vice must be a double dose of that unpalatable medicine, starving within a dreary, solitary, dark cell, in the severe House of Correction; with other such regimen.

It is most reasonable, nay, we may certainly conclude, that within less than one year after commencing this easy, rational, and effectual practice, there will not be found in this mighty metropolis, nor in the kingdom, a single thief or disorderly person. Of course that great expense which our government puts the publick to at present, for the purpose of confining and torturing such numbers of our fellow citizens in gaols, and justitia galleys; of hanging them by scores like unto mangey dogs, for the unpardonable crime of hunger; and, what is the height of absurd tyranny, in premiums of forty pounds paid to its infernal trading justices and their blood hounds, for betraying each of these poor wretches, their own comrades, to the fatal cord: all this expense will be saved to the publick: and being thus saved from that present cruel and tyrannical purpose, will nearly suffice to employ and feed these very wretches in honest industry.

By such means would the kingdom of England be restored to that state of exact order and regular government which it enjoyed before the time when the unjust hand of power wrested from the people their watchful guardians, those conservators of the peace; under whose magistracy no theft or disorder could exist. And the English commonalty would then act
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up to that true character and disposition which they receive from nature, when not scourged into vice by the iron hand of power and strong oppression; and which is that of, the most bluntly honest, the most ingenuous, the most truly brave, industrious, and ingenious commonalty of any nation on this globe, (which I myself can, from personal knowledge vouch, as having seen most of them,) excepting alone those often mentioned Netherlanders; and they are their fathers*.

And having thus pointed out what are the rational and effectual means of reforming our English commonalty, and thereby completely suppressing theft with all other such disorders, we now proceed to more particularly point out the ways and means whereby that remaining part of our idle poor, which is not equal to the toils of agriculture, may be employed, so as they shall be enabled to maintain

* It would be ~~an~~ easy matter to prove, from a variety of other circumstances, that these Netherlanders are the progenitors of the original English. Here it shall suffice to say, that the marks of that affinity still remain in the English language when analyzed, in the common names of money and of places, in the surnames of families, and even in the features of the countenance: but, above all, in their common ardent love of liberty and of commerce. Both of which these Netherlands enjoyed to a degree far exceeding any other state, ever until their Sovereign Charles, surnamed the Vth. succeeded to the throne of Spain; then likewise a free state; but altogether unconnected in every part of its popular government with those Netherlands. That gallant, but ungenerous, and unjust tyrant, availed himself of the advantage presented him by that circumstance, to subject both these states to his sole will and power. He first employed his countrymen, the Netherlanders, to enslave the Spaniards; and then he made use of the Spaniards to enslave the Netherlanders. Their commerce they totally lost by the tyranny of his son Philip. Behold how our fathers came to lose their liberty and commerce. James the I. who united the crowns of England and Scotland in his own person, endeavoured to produce a national union by ever inculcating on the English Parliament this doctrine, *unus rex, una grex, et una lex*. Our historians have vied in representing that king a tyrant, as well as a fool: this one doctrine denotes him neither. The union of all his subjects is the maxim of a truly patriotick king: *divide et impera* is the maxim and characteristick of a true tyrant.

maintain or subsist themselves, and thereby relieve the publick from that burden. It may appear proper that all this last mentioned part of the idle poor should, in each county, be collected and settled in one, two, or more places, where most convenient; but the cheapest and simplest kind of buildings may be erected for lodging them; under discreet managers or housekeepers, (not such as our present parish overseers and contractors) acting by the direction and inspection of the general county board: and by regulations judiciously framed. For the first year it may not be so possible to settle this part of the poor on a regular footing: but, so soon as a sufficient stock of hemp and flax shall be raised from the new cultivated lands, they can then be placed upon a proper plan of earning their own subsistence through their labour; by dealing out to each of them a portion of those articles, either for the first dressing, or for making into threads for various purposes; and by paying them a value adequate to their labour; on which earnings each of them should subsist, and find themselves in every article, saving house rent, in the best manner they can: for this is the only means of introducing industry amongst the poor. There is no doubt that the publick will hold respect to bodily infirmity; and make a proper allowance for it: though, even there, a prudent regard should be held to circumstances; as reported by the managers of those poor, to the general county board; and under the personal inspection of some members.

There still remains one part of the community in a great measure unprovided for. And being sensible that a humane and generous publick readily hearkens to every proposal, that tends to the relief of any truly distressed part of the community, I shall venture to mention an institution that exists amongst those truly respectable Netherlanders, and in their country alone; and which can never be sufficiently praised and admired. It is a sort of female society or sisterhood,
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though not regularly religious or professed. They are stiled *Beguins*, and of such societies there are two or more established within each large city, or in the immediate neighbourhood thereof. Their dwellings are enclosed within a wall, with gates, for the sake of keeping good order: and consist of many separate tenements, contrived to accommodate some of them two, and others four or five female inmates living together, according as it may suit their different humours, or convenience. These *Beguins* receive no charity or assistance of any kind from the publick: neither have they a common stock: but each maintains herself in the best manner she can, by her own earnings, from sowing, or working lace, from spinning, or what else offers in an honest way. Each resident pays a small sum to the publick, in the way of rent: the whole of which together suffices to defray the necessary expenses of repairing and keeping the buildings clean; of paying salaries to proper officers for preserving order, and commonly of one chaplain. So that the publick is put to no expense, after first building this asylum. The *Beguins* are permitted to go abroad into the world to look for employ; though even then their conduct is watched: and, within the walls they are obliged to observe the strictest decorum and decency: seeing that, if any should transgress, they would be immediately delivered over to the police. And, this being the case, many women of small fortune, or who are reduced by distress, retire into those societies; where they spend those days comfortably, which otherwise they must have past in misery and solitude.

Now, in the case that an active magistracy, such as hath been here described, should be established in this country, it is evident, that a proper discharge of that office must deprive a multitude of unfortunate females, of what is indeed an infamous and detestable subsistence; but which, as it is at present their only means of subsistence, being taken from them, they must

must literally starve, if no provision should be made for them by the publick. For no family would receive them in any station immediately from their present state of life, and, as to the common work-houses that might be appointed to receive the weakly poor in general, many of these same unfortunate females, who have been well-born and educated, would rather put an end to their miserable existence, than go there. It is, therefore, suggested merely as a hint, whether a few such societies, in the nature of those described above, established about the metropolis, and one or more in each county, where females might be admitted at the first, without over-curious enquiries, so long as they deported themselves decently, would not form an establishment worthy of this nation. At first, they might possibly require a little aid from the humane: but, so soon as a sufficient quantity of flax could be raised in this country, they would be furnished with the means of subsisting themselves without any sort of assistance. And it may possibly be considered, whether, by means of such societies, together with the weakly poor in the work-houses, a flourishing linen manufactory might not be established in this country. Nay, why might not a manufactory of lace be established by this means, in this country, as well as in Flanders, from whence we purchase it. But, through these societies, as through an imperceptible and unnoticed channel, many of these well-born unfortunate females might again glide into the world; many would be saved from these destructive paths; and many, at present solitary and wretched females, would find an agreeable society. The first building would be the only expense that the publick would be put to. Nevertheless, as hath been said, this is only a hint suggested.

With regard to the poor children, who are at present reared by the different parishes, they would greatly diminish, so soon as their parents should get into
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a way of subsisting themselves. For some time, however, the publick must continue subjected to that expense. And these children might be collected and reared, in two or more hospitals in each county. Not, however, in the manner they are reared by our present parish overseers; in squalor, filth, idleness, and sloth; their whole time and attention being employed in learning to read and write, they acquire the knowledge of no one thing that can render them any way useful in that line of life to which their birth unavoidably binds them. Therefore, no one will take them off the hands of these overseers, but such as mean to benefit by the trifling bounty, and to get rid of the poor young deserted wretches as soon as they can, by starving and cruelty. Insomuch that it would be far more humane in these overseers if, when determined to turn them out, they would at once knock them on the head. Whereas, if that time and attention should be employed in learning, under proper teachers, such things as would fall in, and be useful to them in their future line of life, together with cleanliness, neatness, and activity, their duty to their Maker, and to those who needs must be their superiors in this life, they would be far more useful to themselves, and to society, without that, to them, useless, nay, pernicious qualification of reading and writing: which only teaches them to entertain a high conceit of themselves; to be discontented with Providence for placing them in a situation so much beneath their merit; and to be sullenly insolent to their employers; whom they think no better than themselves, because they know no more. Every one, who has studied this low class of life, must have observed the humility and subordination which the absence of this, to them useless and pernicious accomplishment, causes in those of them who are so happy as to want it.

AND NOW, having gone over the whole ground of our *Poor System*, from its original institution to its present

RECAPITULATION of the whole subject.

present most pernicious and destructive state, it becomes necessary to sum up and contract the whole, which the nature of our subject hath diffused and dissipated, into one point of view; to the end that, by clearly understanding and agreeing upon the nature, the causes, and the present extent of the malady, we may, in consequence thereof, more perfectly agree upon the necessity and nature of that remedy which alone can restore sanity to this dreadfully distempered part of the body politic; which we must term the trunk, as containing the vital parts: and which, together with every other part, limb, and member of that body, hath of late, by the detestable practices of wicked empiricks, been thrown into a state of universal corruption; insomuch that one of those limbs hath actually dropped off from this putrid trunk; another is nearly severed; and only the greatest skill and address can ever restore it to any real use: whilst a third, far more valuable than both these is, through the same cursed practices, consuming and wasting away, in the last stage of a gangrene. The cure of this last valuable member is at present undertaken by (a phenomenon in this country) a regular graduate, a truly constitutional state physician; whom the wretched patient, when almost in her last paroxysms, hath been lately prevailed on to call in. His skill and integrity there is no rational ground to question. And yet the unhappy patient, having been so often before cheated by the delusive promises of deceitful quacks, submits to his practice, with caution and diffidence; as doubting that he too, like the others, may in the end turn out a cheat. Whilst this diffidence is the greatest obstacle to her cure: for what physician can do good, unless his patient shall repose a confidence in him?

But as a confidence in this our state physician is indispensably necessary to the success of the particular remedy here proposed, as well as of every other remedy to our numerous maladies, it becomes here
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a principal object, on that account, to establish such a publick confidence in him. And can any one unbiassed person, on rationally considering the case and situation of that admirable statesman, admit a doubt of his integrity and sincere disposition to do the utmost in his power to benefit his country; and to do no one act to her prejudice. Conscious, as he is, that it was the voice of the people alone, through their representatives, that forced him, against the most extreme repugnance, into the trust and power of serving his country; and conscious, as he likewise is, that it is this voice alone, that doth continue him in that trust and power; can we suppose there is any thing on earth that could influence him to forfeit that same confidence, which thus can alone continue him in the capacity of acquiring the most brilliant, the most truly and highly estimable good that human nature is capable of either receiving or bestowing—the glorious, the never-dying epithet of, **THE SAVIOUR OF HIS COUNTRY**; which, but for him, must have sunk in ruin? Is even a crown, nay, the crown of the universe, equal to the glory of that epithet, in the estimation of but an ordinary wise man? And can we suppose, that what is beneath a crown can induce this man to, not only forfeit that dear honour, but to exchange it for the most detestable of all characters, a **TRAITOR TO HIS COUNTRY**, a betrayer of that trust and confidence which she reposed on him in the hour of her extremity? Is there any part of his conduct that can warrant such mean suspicions? Was it the desire of wealth, or of any honour in the disposal of the Crown, that influenced him to exchange his ease, together with that luxury and dissipation in which he had been reared, for difficulty, for extreme toil, and the utmost exertion that the human mind and body is capable of? If wealth, or such honours, had been his object, he could readily have obtained them in the proffered service of despotism. But these he re-

jected with disdain; he declared perpetual war and mortal feud against despotism, as the ruiner of his country; and, almost alone, and unsupported by any other human aid besides his own wonderful abilities, he dared to confront that dreadful monster, surrounded by its numerous hosts of base stipendiaries: and, though once foiled and thrown to the ground by vile treachery and deceit, he rose again with fresh vigour to more successfully renew the combat; and, prevailing therein, drove that detested offspring of hell from forth this land; to which nothing can restore it, but the treachery of its friends succeeding in the attempt to excite a diffidence of the people in this their patriotick deliverer.

It is fit and becoming, nay, it is absolutely necessary, that these truths should be known and understood, by every individual in this country, from the beggar on the dunghill to the king on the throne (for he with his numerous progeny have suffered, as well as the people, mighty harm from this destructive ambitious despotism,) to the end that, both the people and the Crown, being truly sensible of its horrid qualities, the one may carefully keep it at a distance, and the other may not be ready to catch, *per fas et nefas*, at any offered occasion.

At present, and until the people shall establish some more durable and permanent security against the return of despotism, their only real safety rests on supporting, by their confidence and countenance, that one man, who hath so successfully delivered them for the present. And I presume to think, that no one will withhold this confidence from him, who shall candidly weigh in the balance of reason even the arguments that have been offered here; and which are arguments suggested by the pure undesigning, uninfluenced, and disinterested *amor patriæ*; by one who is perfectly unknowing of and unknown by ministers of state: who, entertaining no wishes to profit by them, is moved by neither hope nor fear
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to praise or condemn them; but forms his estimation of them from their treatment of his country alone.

Wholly occupied as that great statesman is at present, by the imminently impending danger of that important Indian object, he is restrained by the nature of our excellent constitution from bringing forward any other weighty concern, until that one shall be first dispatched. But, that he will, provided his life and the power of doing good shall continue, pay a due attention to that most important object, which is our present subject, there is no reason to doubt. In the mean time I, still acting in the humble character of an individual contributing his mite towards the publick good, may in some degree ease the load of that minister's weighty burthen, by preparing the minds of the publick, and attracting their attention to certain circumstances; which, in this particular business, it is absolutely necessary to explain; but which might not be so properly explained from his station.

It hath been said, that our parish Poor System was first devised, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, as the temporary remedy of an evil, which then first started up in this country; even the rage for unbounded commerce; which, causing a partial decrease in agriculture, deprived a part of the commonalty of their wonted means of subsistence; and thereby caused the necessity of instituting this parish poor scheme, as a relief for the wants of such part. It hath been also said, that this parish poor relief appears to have been the best contrived remedy for that evil; which might have been considered, at that time, to be only of a transient nature; though it turned out otherwise. Nevertheless, so long as this evil was confined within the narrowest possible bounds, and the remedy thereto was duly applied, through a proper attention of government, the community felt but little damage or inconvenience therefrom. And such proper attention was paid by government to both those objects, so long as the people retained their

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constitutional weight in that government. But so soon as the people began to lose that their constitutional weight, then did the attention of government begin to relax, both with respect to the growth of the evil itself, and the due application of its destined remedy; *Causa scientiæ patet*. And, of course, in proportion as the direct power* of the Crown increased, so did the growth of that said evil increase; more especially through the encouragement given to that destructive article of luxury, carriage-keeping; and, in like manner, did that gross and inexcusable misapplication of the said destined remedy increase; until they advanced together to the present degree of magnitude. But it must be remarked, that, notwithstanding every part of the community did, as it ever must, suffer grievously in consequence of the whole powers of government being so vested directly in the Crown, yet was the share of the poor in that suffering much heavier, in proportion to that of the rich; for this sufficient reason, that, being poor, they were still less capable of resenting the abuse of that power.

And, from what hath been said, it will appear, that the situation or circumstances of our present Poor System are become so exceedingly changed, from

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from the situation or circumstances on which that system was at first instituted, that the two systems are become two things of a nature altogether different; at least, they bear no nearer relation to each other, than what the graft of a tree bears to the stock thereof; which may be of a quite different *genus*. And, for that reason, our taking up the review of this system, so far back as the first institution thereof, may appear to have been superfluous; for that it would have been sufficient to take it up at its present situation. And, truly, it would have been thus superfluous, but for this one reason, that, by showing the disparity of circumstance betwixt the two systems, we thereby cut off a plea of excuse, or argument, in support of our present system, that it is no other than what was originally instituted in the wise reign of Queen Elizabeth. An argument which, however false, yet would have had its weight with many, had not the fallacy thereof been by these means explained.

But a slight review of that truly represented situation in which our commonalty stands at present, with respect to the rest of the community, will sufficiently evince the pressing necessity there is of a reform in that said situation.—For, we have there divided the commonalty, and it is presumed rightly, into two parts or halves. The one of which halves is supposed to be actually employed. But on what footing are they so employed? In the most idle, slovenly, disorderly, and ungovernable state, of any commonalty besides on earth; owing to the total neglect and abuse of government giving birth and encouragement thereto, through the ready and easy admission upon the parish, and the villainy of our trading justices, holding forth to them safety and impunity in stealing and vagrant begging.—For the maintenance of the other one half of our commonalty, being utterly idle and unemployed, the publick is taxed in an enormous and almost incredible sum: but it appears that, through the same neglect and

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total inattention of government, this mighty sum is applied, or rather misapplied, in such a shameful manner, that the idle poor receive little or no relief from it: the one half thereof being spent on purposes which no way approach towards relief of the poor: and the other half, which seems to be expended on the maintenance of the poor, is paid into the hands of contractors; the veriest dregs of human nature; to be by them applied, at their absolute discretion, on subsisting and maintaining the *legally entitled* poor, in parish workhouses. And this they do, on such beastly, filthy, and slavish terms, that the greater part of those poor reject it with disdain, and rather choose to throw themselves on the precarious extorted charity of the publick; or on stealing, with all its dangers. And by such management is that enormous bounty of the publick frustrated, and diverted from its purpose.

We now come to the last part of this idle and unemployed commonalty; which, as being excluded by law from even the choice of sharing in that so disdained publick bounty, are reduced to the unavoidable necessity of either downright starving, or of subsisting by extorted charity and by stealing. It cannot be expected that a publick which is already burdened with such an expensive contribution of charity, should be very liberal in supererogative charity; yet their tender hearts do still contribute somewhat; though that is confined to a few, and those generally the least deserving. The great remainder, which is numerous indeed, is then placed in the straitly pent up situation of *starving*, or *stealing*: and this great number is still further augmented, in the manner mentioned, by the knavery of our trading justices. Now, in what situation do all these desperadoes stand, with respect to the publick? In that of wolves, who, being absolutely excluded from all possible means of gratifying their hunger, otherwise than by preying upon every object that comes in their way,

way, form themselves into troops or bands, in order to carry on their depredations, havock, and ravage, with greater efficacy and success: and, were they other than Britons, they would, like true wolves, add murder to their plundering; though, if much longer continued in their present desperate situation, it will come to that at last. The publick, on the other hand, treats them exactly as wolves; they set a price of forty pounds upon the head of each poor wretch, who shall be convicted, at the bar, of this horrid crime or practice of stealing to subsist life: and this unnatural premium falls almost ever to the share of those blood-hounds of despotism, the trading justices. When brought to the bar, numbers, though evidently guilty, are, through the lenity of the judges, dismissed: but to what good? To the unavoidable necessity of being soon brought back there again to be tried for the same crime. And when condemned, it is either to hanging, still the death of a wolf; or otherwise to still more inhuman tortures, in jails, and justitia galleys. And all this is pretended to be necessarily done only *in terrorem*: But with what prospect of success?

And now let us fairly, and in plain honest sense and words, state the case, as it actually stands at present, betwixt those two parts of this nation or community; the rich, whom we shall term the publick; and the poor, whom we shall term the commonalty. And first, for the case of the commonalty. One half of these we have supposed to be employed, in some one shape or another; and this is the part that is the best provided. But upon what principle, and terms, are, even these, employed at present by the publick? merely on that of its own necessity and convenience; because it cannot do without them. But are the laws of society, to the benefit of which they are entitled as rational beings, exerted to promote their happiness, by enforcing industry, sobriety, and frugality? Surely not: on the contrary every
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method

method is used, in the manner mentioned, by our government, to promote and encourage idleness, drunkenness, and profusion: and these methods have perfectly succeeded; by rendering them the most profligate, disorderly, and continually indigent working commonalty in the whole world: insomuch that but few of them are capable of rearing their own offspring; which, for that reason, falling on the parish, are seldom reared to any good; and so, we are in a fair way of getting rid in time of that *genus* of beings, termed a working commonalty. But the other unemployed part is actually denied a rank amongst rational beings. They are mocked with the show of immense wealth and luxury amongst the rich: nay, they are tantalized with the parade of amazing sums contributed by the publick, in the way of relief or charity for them, whilst in fact they are not permitted to taste of it: and are therefore placed in the situation of Wolves; to subsist by ravage, at the risk of hanging and torture. Such is the real state of our whole commonalty, with relation to the publick.

Nor is the situation of the publick, with relation to the commonalty, a whit less deplorable. It contributes, greatly beyond its ability, a very large part of its substance yearly to the commonalty, with the view, and to the end, that they will permit it to enjoy the remaining part, in peace, and undisturbed. But, instead of that, this commonalty is, ever and hourly, by day as well as by night, threatening danger to the lives of the publick; and cruelly ravaging, robbing, and plundering their property.

Did there ever exist in any country besides this, such a contradiction to reason and the nature of things? Though every day we see and feel it, yet is this such an unnatural case, that we can scarcely credit our own senses: reason rejects it, as a thing impossible; that a publick, thus evidently generous, liberal, and humane, should treat the commonalty with that inhuman barbarity, tyranny, and oppression, that hath

been here truly stated; or that, on the other hand, a commonalty knownenly brave, honest, and humane, should behave to the publick in the true character of ravenous revengeful wolves. From whence can this gross perversion of reason and nature on both sides arise? The answer is ready—That mutual perversion of nature is the work of Despotism: that fell enemy to nature and all her works. Despotism, that horrid monster, engendered betwixt popular corruption and regal ambition: it is it that hath thus perverted the brave, the generous, and noble disposition of the whole British nation.

Behold, ye corrupt electors and elected, the work of your hands!—When you sold that glorious constitution, which your fathers framed and handed down to you, as a sure bulwark and security for your persons, your property, and the free exercise of your reason; when, by selling that, you delivered up into the hands of ONE, the unlimited power to dispose of all these at his will and pleasure, then did you engender that foul monster, *Despotism*; which hath thus perverted nature, and done a thousand mischiefs besides; entailing bankruptcy and disgrace upon all your innocent fellow citizens, and their still more innocent posterity.

And, behold, O ambition, the foul deeds of thy misbegotten offspring! blind, far worse than blind ambition! that with its distorted opticks, regards as true royal greatness and happiness, the absolute power of slavishly applying the persons and property of the people to its own selfish purposes; thereby forcing them to act thus contrary to reason and the nature of things; to become the mutual tormenters of each other, and the instruments of their own misery, heavy misfortune, and lasting disgrace; whilst it earns to itself their deep, though unheard, curses, with eternal obloquy and reproach*.

But,

* Darius, the great King of Persia, had his page to hollow daily after dinner, "Sire, remember the Greeks," lest he should otherwise

But, at this moment, when mutual adversity, recalling their reason, hath placed both King and people on the very spot where the most just and rational constitution of Britain meant they should relatively stand, a *British King* and a *British people*. At this moment, whilst on that spot, the Good Genius of Britain calls, with a loud and awful voice, **HERE REST!** This is the spot whereon you shall build true happiness for the people, with true royal greatness and happiness for the monarch. Advance not either of you, nor retreat, one foot, nay not an inch, from this spot; whoever councils either of you otherwise, is a wicked sycophant, and an enemy to both.—Hear, O ye people, one and all, representing and represented! so long as you shall virtuously, honourably, and honestly rest on that constitutional ground, you shall never have a bad King. A constitutional King of Britain can do no ill: if he does ill he is not a constitutional King: he, with a corrupt people, must first have strangled the constitution. And hear, all ye Kings of Britain present and to come! the King who shall not attempt to go beyond that proper limit of power with which this constitution hath vested him will be a truly great and happy monarch; the greatest monarch on this globe: the people of Britain, when justly governed, can make him such; for they are excellent good subjects, but miserable bad slaves: and, along with his greatness, he will possess the blessings of a happy people. Can royal wisdom hesitate one moment in this choice? Or is this a doctrine intricate or impracticable?

Thus speaks Truth, and the Good Genius of Britain, Despise not the voice of Truth, for the meanness of the

otherwise forget the disgrace he had suffered from the Athenians in the field of Marathon. So ought the King and people of Britain to be frequently bid, "*Remember despotism,*" lest either of them should forget its mischiefs. *Nec, nobis pigebit vel incondita ac rudi voce memoriam prioris servitutis, ac testimonium presentium bonorum composuisse.*

the organ through which it is conveyed. Truth wants not rank, grandeur, riches, learning, nor high reputation for her vehicle: these are all too suspicious qualities for her to use—but where she can find a mind free from high wishes, without selfish design, illumined by the pure torch of *amor patriæ*, the *justum et tenacem propositi virum*, he is the organ, through which truth can, with propriety, convey her salutary doctrines to both King and people; to which, if they shall hearken, they will both be truly great, and truly happy.

Britain, as hath been said, still possesses mighty resources of true and solid power; it remains only for King and people to join, or rather to vye, in justly, honourably, and wisely employing those resources. Let this blessed emulation commence, by doing justice to our long oppressed, and cruelly enslaved commonalty. Emancipate them: place them in the situation for which nature produced them, of earning an independent subsistence by honest industry; they will gratefully and richly repay you. To this truly rational, humane, and beneficial purpose apply that enormous poor fund, which you at present pay, for no one rational purpose in life; together with those sums which are weakly bestowed or extorted by the importunity and casual pilferings of vagrant beggars; as also, that further sum which you at present pay as a price for the lives of your helpless fellow citizens; and for torturing them in *jails* and *justitia galleys*. When collected, and added together, you will find these sums greatly exceed your most sanguine expectations. Apply them all to furnish pay and employ to the present idle commonalty; on the subject, and in the manner, here proposed; or, if any other, more beneficial, shall be devised, employ them on that; only let them have pay and employ. Help out that employ, by suppressing those idle, fantastical, and useless carriages of pride and luxury; with their innumerable useless horses, which consume half

the produce of our lands. The greater part of the besotted carriage keepers will soon find the benefit of it, in their health, and in their purse, and they will thank you for it*. Establish a proper magistracy on the footing here proposed, according to the constitution of England: together with the other regulations as here suggested, or improved. These things being done, you will find, that, in less than six years after the commencement of such a generous undertaking, you will have no payment of poor's rates; unless it be for the really impotent, which will be next to nothing; and, in the interim of that period, the present heavy burden will yearly lighten. In one day, after declaring pay and employ to the poor, all your troublesome vagrant beggars, with their pilferings, will disappear. Within less than a month, you will get rid of by far the greater part of the present ravenous and destructive wolves: and, in less than a year, that noxious vermin will be completely extirpated. Your *jails*, your *gibbets*, and your *justitia galleys*, those disgraceful emblems of tyranny and slavery, then will be done away.

But when we come to look at the glorious change that this will produce in the general condition of Britain, how inviting doth such an undertaking appear. An industrious, frugal, sober, and orderly commonalty, propagating a healthy, hardy, and brave progeny, to supply her navies, her armies, her fishery, her manufactures, her commerce, and navigation: furnishing her from the earth with every necessary or convenient article that it can produce; without being beholden or dependent on foreign states, without risk of the seas in while of war, and without draining her of her wealth.

Britain

* If the members of the legislature should think it hard to pay a heavy duty on their own carriages, as being necessary to their attending the service of the publick, their particular carriages may, on that account, be exempted from the tax.

Britain stands in no need of foreign supply, foreign dependance, or foreign aid, with which she cannot supply herself by agriculture; by that one most valuable or rather invaluable foreign possession which she still retains; by her manufactures, and by her commerce and navigation. Her navy, irresistible when manned by free British sailors, will defend her against the whole world in arms. And, to effect all this, requires only a sincere union betwixt King and people, to promote the mutual good. On these terms, Britain will be restored to a state more flourishing, more truly great, and more happy, than she ever yet stood in.

A T A R T A

F I N I S.

British lands is no need of foreign supply, for they
 depend on foreign aid, with which the cannot
 ply itself by agriculture, the other one and a half
 or rather actually for a position which the will
 retain by her maritime power, and by her commerce
 and navigation. Her navy, which is so powerful
 by itself, will be so powerful by itself, and the whole
 world in arms. And to this end, it is only
 a loose union between the two, to provide
 the mutual good. On the other hand, Britain will be
 better off to a large measure, and more truly great
 and more happy, than it is at present.

E R R A T A.

- Page 10, For *sequal* r. *sequal*. Marginal Note, *nature* r. *nature*.
 33, Line two and three dele, *because they*.
 37, Last line, *even* r. *ever*.
 46, For *harad* rock r. *harven* rock.
 51, Marginal Note, r. *Proper application of the four ton*.
 66, Note, for *power of enclosing* r. *charge of enclosing*.
 71, For *the country* r. *this country*.
 89, Note, for *an easy matter* r. *an easy matter*.

